

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE DURING & AFTER PREGNANCY

WARNING SIGNS

Get medical care right away if you start having any of these warning signs:



Severe stomach pain that won't go away



Severe swelling of the hands and face



Severe headache that won't go away



Changes in vision



Dizziness or fainting



Chest pain or fast-beating heart



Severe nausea and throwing up (not like morning sickness)



Trouble breathing

This does not list every warning sign you might have. If something doesn't feel right, contact your health care provider.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE:

High blood pressure (also called hypertension) happens when your blood pushes too hard against the walls of your blood vessels. High blood pressure does not usually cause symptoms until a severe or life-threatening stage. It can start before you get pregnant, while you are pregnant, or after your pregnancy.

RISKS FOR HAVING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE



Being pregnant for the first time



Having a close relative with high blood pressure



Smoking



Not being physically active



Blood pressure issues with a previous pregnancy

Also, being overweight and having diabetes.

RISKS TO YOU AND YOUR BABY

- Preeclampsia
- Stroke
- Heart disease
- Your baby being born too early or being too small

PREECLAMPSIA

Preeclampsia is high blood pressure with signs of other problems. Some of these signs can be protein in your urine or seizures. Your provider will test your blood and urine to see if you are having these problems. They may also prescribe a low-dose aspirin to prevent preeclampsia.

Preeclampsia can happen after the 20th week of pregnancy. It can also happen after giving birth, even if you did not have high blood pressure during pregnancy.

RISKS FOR HAVING PREECLAMPSIA



Chronic high blood pressure



Being overweight*



Kidney disease



Preeclampsia with a previous pregnancy



Being pregnant with more than one baby



Diabetes*



Autoimmune conditions (like lupus)

**Also a risk for developing high blood pressure.*

RISKS TO YOU AND BABY

- Stroke
- Seizures
- Organ damage
- Death
- Your baby being born too early



College of Human Medicine
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STRONG Beginnings
Strengthening families for a Healthy Start

MANAGING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE DURING & AFTER PREGNANCY

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

NUTRITION

Focus on eating:

- Fruits and veggies
- Whole grains (oatmeal and whole grain bread/pasta)
- Low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese
- Skinless chicken and fish
- Nuts, peas and beans

Fresh, canned, and frozen fruits and veggies are all healthy choices.

Look for veggies labeled low-sodium, reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY*

5 days a week, 30 minutes a day is best. But, even just 10 minutes a day can help.

Pick a few exercises that work for you.

Examples - walk, dance, yoga, or find simple exercises online.



**Talk with your provider before changing your activity levels.*

MANAGING STRESS

It's normal to experience stress during and after pregnancy.

To help manage stress:

Make a list. What needs to be done and what can wait?

Try deep breathing or meditation.

Remember, it's okay to ask for help.

Work with your provider to address any mental health concerns you may have.

**DON'T SMOKE, USE
DRUGS, DRINK ALCOHOL,
OR USE MARIJUANA
PRODUCTS.**

WORK WITH YOUR PROVIDER

MONITOR YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AT HOME

If you are taking your own blood pressure at home, talk with your provider about important things to know.

What symptoms could mean I'm having problems with my blood pressure?

What should I do if I'm having symptoms?

If a reading is higher than normal, when should I call the provider's office or go to the emergency room?

What is a healthy blood pressure reading for me?

MEDICATION

If you and your provider decide that medication is needed:

- Do not stop taking it without talking to your provider.
- Follow the directions written on your bottle.
- Talk with your provider about side effects and how to manage them.



BLOOD PRESSURE LOG

Use a blood pressure log to write down your readings and share it with your provider at appointments.

GO TO YOUR APPOINTMENTS

Your provider will monitor your blood pressure readings, symptoms and changes in your urine and blood.

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