

# High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy: Care Instructions

## Overview



High blood pressure (hypertension) means that the force of blood against your artery walls is too strong.

High blood pressure problems during pregnancy include:

- **Chronic hypertension.** This is high blood pressure that starts before pregnancy.
- **Gestational hypertension.** This is high blood pressure that starts in the second or third trimester of pregnancy.
- **Preeclampsia.** This is a problem that includes high blood pressure and signs of organ injury during pregnancy. In some cases, it leads to eclampsia. Eclampsia causes seizures.

High blood pressure during pregnancy can affect the amount of oxygen and nutrients your baby receives. This can affect how your baby grows. High blood pressure can also cause other serious problems for both you and your baby, such as placental abruption.

To prevent problems, you and your baby will be watched very closely. You will have to check your blood pressure often during pregnancy and possibly after pregnancy.

If your blood pressure rises suddenly or is very high during your pregnancy, your doctor may prescribe medicines. They can usually control blood pressure.

If your blood pressure affects your or your baby's health, your doctor may need to deliver your baby early. After your baby is born, your blood pressure will probably improve. But sometimes blood pressure problems continue after birth.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take and write down your blood pressure at home if your doctor says to.
- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a

problem with your medicine.

- Do not smoke. This is one of the best things you can do to help your baby be healthy. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Don't gain too much weight during pregnancy. Talk to your doctor about how much weight gain is healthy.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- If your doctor says it's okay, get regular exercise. Walking or swimming several times a week can be healthy for you and your baby.
- Reduce stress, and find time to relax. This is very important if you continue to work or have a busy schedule. It's also important if you have small children at home.

## When should you call for help?



Share this information with your partner or a friend. They can help you watch for warning signs.

**Call 911** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have a seizure.

**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have symptoms of preeclampsia, such as:
  - Sudden swelling of your face, hands, or feet.
  - New vision problems (such as dimness, blurring, or seeing spots).
  - A severe headache.
- Your blood pressure is very high, such as 160/110 or higher.
- Your blood pressure is higher than your doctor told you it should be, or it rises quickly.
- You have new nausea or vomiting.
- You think that you are in labor.
- You have pain in your belly or pelvis.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You gain weight rapidly.

## Where can you learn more?

Scan the QR code or Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/hcnmychart>



Enter **A052** in the search box to learn more about "**High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy: Care Instructions.**"

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