

# PREECLAMPSIA

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## WHAT IS PREECLAMPSIA?

**Preeclampsia** is a pregnancy-related complication that involves **high blood pressure** and **injuries in other organs**, such as the lungs, kidneys, and brain.

Preeclampsia is a serious pregnancy-related condition occurring after 20th week of pregnancy. **It can lead to complications including emergency C-section, preterm birth, and even death.**

Preeclampsia can also occur **after birth** and is called **postpartum preeclampsia**.

## ECLAMPSIA AND HELLP SYNDROME

Preeclampsia **and postpartum preeclampsia** can **develop to eclampsia**. **Eclampsia** a condition when high blood pressure develops into **brain seizures**.

Some develop another type of preeclampsia called **HELLP syndrome**. HELLP is a condition where the red **blood cells** and **liver** are damaged and the blood **does not clot** well.

**Early diagnosis and treatment** can help better control the situation and decrease the risks of further health complications.

## WARNING SIGNS OF PREECLAMPSIA

- High blood pressure
- Protein in the urine (proteinuria). It makes urine foamy
- Swelling in face, legs, hands, and feet
- Pain in the upper right abdomen, just below the ribs
- A strong feeling of unwellness
- Vision changes

## OTHER SYMPTOMS

- Shortness of breath
- Nausea and vomiting in the 2nd half of pregnancy
- Decreased urine output (oliguria)
- Sudden weight gains
- Severe headache that does not want to go away.

## RISK FACTORS

- Multiple pregnancy (twins or triplets)
- History of high blood pressure or diabetes
- Preeclampsia in a previous pregnancy
- Family history of preeclampsia
- Being older than 35 years old
- Black or African American ethnicity



**MANY OF THESE SIGNS CAN BE MISTAKEN FOR NORMAL PREGNANCY SYMPTOMS. HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE IS ONE OF THE MOST INDICATIVE SIGNS.**

## IF YOU HAVE PREECLAMPSIA

- Checking your blood pressure, following up with weekly doctor visits or even more frequent blood tests and fetal monitoring with nonstress tests will help decide the next steps in your care plan.
- Recognizing patterns in your baby's movement and counting the kicks can help you follow how often your baby moves.

**If your case is more complicated, you may need to stay in the hospital and receive medical treatment to monitor and improve your health. You may receive medications for:**

- Reducing blood pressure (antihypertensives)
- Helping your organs' recovery, and maturing your baby's lungs (corticosteroids)
- Preventing seizures (anticonvulsants)
- If your condition remains severe, your physician may induce labor to prevent harm to you and your baby.

## IF YOU HAVE POSTPARTUM PREECLAMPSIA

- Postpartum preeclampsia **can occur within 48 hours after birth, and up to 6 weeks postpartum.**
- You can have postpartum preeclampsia without having preeclampsia during pregnancy.
- Because treatment cannot wait, you may need to be **readmitted** to the hospital.
- You may receive **medication** to bring your blood pressure back to normal and prevent seizures. They will keep monitoring your blood pressure and urine and prescribe you treatment.



## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO LOWER YOUR RISK

### Talk to your provider:

- Ask them if weekly appointments for monitoring blood pressure and blood sugar levels are recommended for you
- If preeclampsia is in your medical history, discuss with your provider if low-dose aspirin is right for you to lower the risk of developing preeclampsia during your current pregnancy

### Try eating and drinking more:

- Dairy products because they are rich in calcium
- Egg yolks, cabbage, whole grains, and citrus fruits because they are high in vitamin C and E
- Water - at least 6-8 glasses of water a day, especially during extreme heat

### Try eating less:

- Salt and caffeine

## TIPS TO BE YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF

- **Check your BMI here:** [bit.ly/BMI-CHECK](https://bit.ly/BMI-CHECK)
- **How Can I Get WIC?:** [bit.ly/GetWIC](https://bit.ly/GetWIC)
- **Enroll in CalFresh:** [bit.ly/CalFreshCCFB](https://bit.ly/CalFreshCCFB)

## PREECLAMPSIA RESOURCES

- **March Of Dimes:** [bit.ly/MODpreeclampsia](https://bit.ly/MODpreeclampsia)
- **Genetics:** [bit.ly/MedlinePlusPreeclampsia](https://bit.ly/MedlinePlusPreeclampsia)
- **Preeclampsia & Pregnancy:** [bit.ly/ACOGhighBP](https://bit.ly/ACOGhighBP)
- **Preeclampsia & Stroke:** [bit.ly/NCBIstroke](https://bit.ly/NCBIstroke)