Be Prepared for Preeclampsia

Preeclampsia is a serious disease related to high blood pressure that can strike fast – “eclampsia” is the Greek word for lightning. It can happen to any pregnant woman during the second half of her pregnancy, or up to six weeks after delivery. Finding preeclampsia early is important for both mothers and their babies. If you’re pregnant and experience symptoms or just don’t feel right, contact your healthcare provider right away.

**KNOW THE FACTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severe headache and chest pain that won’t go away even with medication</td>
<td>Affects up to 10% of pregnancies worldwide</td>
<td>Talk to your healthcare provider before or early in your pregnancy about your risk for preeclampsia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swelling of the face and hands</td>
<td>Results in 16% of maternal deaths in low-to-middle income countries</td>
<td>Attend all your prenatal appointments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight gain of more than 5 pounds in one week</td>
<td>Accounts for 1/4 of maternal deaths in Latin America and 1/10 of maternal deaths in Africa and Asia</td>
<td>Monitor your blood pressure and weight regularly, and contact your healthcare provider immediately if either becomes unexpectedly high</td>
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<td>Difficulty breathing, gasping, or panting</td>
<td>Affects up to 6% of pregnancies in the postpartum period</td>
<td>Know your family history, especially for pregnancy, high blood pressure, and heart disease</td>
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<td>Nausea after mid-pregnancy</td>
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<td>Eat right, exercise regularly, and maintain a healthy weight</td>
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<td>Changes in vision (spots, light flashes, or vision loss)</td>
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<td>Upper right belly pain</td>
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**SYMPTOMS**

- Severe headache and chest pain that won’t go away even with medication
- Swelling of the face and hands
- Weight gain of more than 5 pounds in one week
- Difficulty breathing, gasping, or panting
- Nausea after mid-pregnancy
- Changes in vision (spots, light flashes, or vision loss)
- Upper right belly pain

**RISKS**

- For Mom:
  - Seizures
  - Water in the lungs
  - Death

- For Baby:
  - Premature birth
  - Low birth weight
  - Stunting
  - Death

**WHAT TO DO**

- Talk to your healthcare provider before or early in your pregnancy about your risk for preeclampsia
- Attend all your prenatal appointments
- Monitor your blood pressure and weight regularly, and contact your healthcare provider immediately if either becomes unexpectedly high
- Know your family history, especially for pregnancy, high blood pressure, and heart disease
- Eat right, exercise regularly, and maintain a healthy weight

*The term preeclampsia includes related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, which may not be distinguishable from preeclampsia.*

Presented by BabyCenter; Ending Eclampsia/USAID; International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy; Preeclampsia Foundation; PRECISE