Be Prepared for Preeclampsia

Preeclampsia is a serious disease related to high blood pressure that can strike out of the blue – “eclampsia” is the Greek word for lightning. Eclampsia can happen to any pregnant woman during the second half of her pregnancy, or up to six weeks after delivery. Diagnosing 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**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affects up to 10% of pregnancies worldwide</th>
<th>A leading cause of maternal and infant death with 76,000 maternal and 500,000 infant deaths each year worldwide</th>
<th>Over 99% of pregnancy-related deaths occur in low-to-middle income countries</th>
<th>Common factor in preterm delivery, accounts for 20% of all neonatal intensive care admissions</th>
<th>Affects up to 6% of pregnancies in the postpartum period</th>
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<td>Results in 16% of maternal deaths in low-to-middle income countries</td>
<td>Accounts for 1/4 of maternal deaths in Latin America and 1/10 of maternal deaths in Africa and Asia</td>
<td>Risk of end stage renal disease in women with preeclampsia is 3 to 5 times higher than in women who did not have preeclampsia</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
- Stroke
- Death

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

**WHAT TO DO**

- **During pregnancy**
  - Talk to your healthcare provider before or early in your pregnancy about your risk for preeclampsia
  - Know your family history, especially for pregnancy, high blood pressure, and heart disease
  - Attend all your prenatal appointments

- **After pregnancy**
  - Monitor your blood pressure and weight regularly, and contact your healthcare provider immediately if either becomes unexpectedly high
  - 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 Ending Eclampsia/USAID; International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy; Preeclampsia Foundation