



Patient Information

High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy Following Birth

This information leaflet is designed for women who developed hypertension (high blood pressure) during or shortly after their pregnancy.

Hypertension includes:

- 1) Essential/ chronic hypertension
- 2) Gestational or pregnancy induced hypertension
- 3) Pre-eclampsia

Hypertension in pregnancy can increase the risk of blood pressure problems in future pregnancies (1:5 or 20%) as well as longer term health conditions. These risks can be reduced by adopting a healthy lifestyle; taking your prescribed medication and having regular follow ups with your General Practitioner (GP).

What should I do now?

The first thing that you should do now is to keep your blood pressure well controlled. This will help now and in the future.

Take your medication as prescribed by your doctor and have regular blood pressure (BP) checks with your midwife, GP or health visitor.

Your blood pressure medication may be reduced so you need to make an appointment to see your GP two weeks after you have given birth. Your medication does not interfere with breastfeeding.

What can I do to help myself in the long term?

Eat a **healthy diet** and reduce your salt intake

- Take **regular exercise**, for example a walk for 20 minutes 3 times per week
- **Avoid smoking**. If you would like with this look up
- <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-stop-smoking>



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- Try and **maintain a healthy weight**. This is a BMI between 18.5 – 24.9
- If you have diabetes, try to keep your **blood sugars** well controlled
- Make **annual appointments** to have your blood pressure checked with your GP. (This may be more often if you have chronic/ essential hypertension)

When should I get urgent medical help?

If you develop any of the following symptoms, you should seek medical attention urgently:

- **Severe headaches**
- **Blurred vision or flashing lights in your eyes**
- **Pain in your upper tummy**
- **Worsening leg swelling**
- **Breathlessness**
- **BP >150/100**

If you have been discharged home on medication, please make an appointment with your GP for two weeks after your birth.

Will I get high blood pressure in my next pregnancy?

If you had gestational hypertension, you have a 1:7 (14%) chance of getting gestational hypertension again and a 1:14 (7%) chance of getting pre-eclampsia in your next pregnancy.¹

If you have pre-eclampsia between 28-34 weeks pregnant, you have a 1:3 (33%) chance of getting pre-eclampsia again in your next pregnancy.

If you had pre-eclampsia between 35-37 weeks pregnant, you have a 1:4 (25%) chance of getting pre-eclampsia in your next pregnancy.

If you had pre-eclampsia, you have a 1:8 risk of getting gestational hypertension in your next pregnancy.

If you had pre-eclampsia or gestational hypertension, you have a 1:50 (2%) or 1:34 (3%) risk of developing chronic high blood pressure.

What should I do if I get pregnant?

If you take long term blood pressure medication, see your GP to review this.

Talk to your GP or midwife about taking 150mg aspirin and vitamin D supplements to reduce the risk of you getting blood pressure problems



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- Action of pre-eclampsia (APEC) <https://action-on-pre-eclampsia.org.uk/>
- Blood Pressure UK <http://www.bloodpressureuk.org/Home>

Smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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