

Hypertension in pregnancy: diagnosis and management

Information for the public

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High blood pressure during pregnancy: the care you should expect

Most women don't have problems with their blood pressure during pregnancy. A few women do have high blood pressure (hypertension), either because they had it before they were pregnant or they develop it during pregnancy. The right way to manage high blood pressure varies, but if it's not well controlled it can lead to complications for both the mother and her baby. It can also increase the risk of pre-eclampsia, a sudden rise in blood pressure after 20 weeks of pregnancy that can be dangerous if it's not treated quickly, so extra care and check-ups are very important.

We want this guideline to make a difference by making sure:

- pregnant women who develop high blood pressure are offered the right tests and treatments to keep their blood pressure within a safe range for them and their baby
- women who are taking medicine for blood pressure and want to try for a baby (or have found they are pregnant) are given the best advice about the safety of different medicines for their baby
- women have good advice and support, including how to spot signs of pre-eclampsia (see the [NHS website](#)) and what to do
- care teams give women the right follow-up care and check-ups after they have given birth.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your care team should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should also discuss with you:

- how it might affect your birth plan if you develop high blood pressure during your pregnancy
- how best to control your blood pressure after your baby is born, and what happens if you have to take medicine while breastfeeding
- your likelihood of developing high blood pressure in the future (including in future pregnancies).

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about high blood pressure in pregnancy.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Action on Pre-Eclampsia](#) (APEC), 01386 761848
- [Blood Pressure UK](#), 020 7882 6218
- [National Childbirth Trust](#) (NCT) pregnancy and birth helpline, 0300 33 00 700

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with women who have been affected by high blood pressure during pregnancy and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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