

## How to Prevent Preeclampsia

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### What is preeclampsia?

Preeclampsia is a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy involving multiple organs that is identified by hypertension (a blood pressure reading greater than 140/90) and protein in the urine. You are at greatest risk for preeclampsia if you:

- Have never been pregnant before or are pregnant for the first time with a new partner,
- Are obese,
- have hypertension already or a family history of hypertension or preeclampsia
- are African American
- Have had preeclampsia in a previous pregnancy
- Have renal disease
- Are pregnant with multiples

Preeclampsia originates from tightly wound spiral arteries at the sight of implantation of the placenta (Frye, 1995). When these are constricted, maternal blood pressure rises to move blood to the placenta. Some evidence also suggests that this could be hereditary (King, Brucker, Fahey, Kriebs, Gegor, & Varney, 2015).

### How do I know if I have preeclampsia?

**Monitoring your blood pressure is the central reason for regular prenatal visits** with your midwife. A steadily rising blood pressure, usually after 34 weeks' will be monitored and usually matched with the finding of protein in your urine when you do your urine dip (La Bleu, 2016). If this happens and your blood pressure remains below 160/110 we will collaborate with your back up doctor to consider the option of home birth or a transfer of care for hospital birth if your condition progresses or your baby's growth are compromised.

### Risks

The most important thing to know is that maternal and fetal conditions that are deteriorating indicate prompt delivery. The only way to cure preeclampsia is to deliver the baby and placenta. **Signs of disease progression are right upper quadrant stomach pain or epigastric pain, visual or cerebral disturbances, and ongoing headache. If you experience any of these symptoms notify your midwife immediately and head to the nearest hospital for evaluation.**

With preeclampsia you are also at a great risk for the placenta to abrupt (separate prematurely) because the placentas of women diagnosed with preeclampsia tend to be shallowly implanted.

### Can I prevent preeclampsia?

A healthy diet is the foundation to a healthy pregnancy. A diet deficient in protein, calcium, and vitamin D has been implemented as being a cause of preeclampsia but no evidence exists to correlate this (King, Brucker, Fahey, Kriebs, Gegor, & Varney, 2015), A healthy uterine lining and a sufficient diet at the time of implantation are the best allies against preeclampsia.

- ❖ Regular prenatal care will identify preeclampsia early and reduce your risks of this condition progressing to severe levels. In fact, the entire schedule of prenatal visits is centered around the most important diagnostic tool used at each visit- taking your blood pressure.
- ❖ Supporting healthy vascular function and growth during pregnancy is also important. Liquid chlorophyll or daily alfalfa supplementation are strongly recommended. Pregnancy tea contains nettle, which also supports healthy vascular function and liver support. In addition to this, at least 80 gr of protein should be consumed per day.

- ❖ Inadequate salt intake during pregnancy could contribute to the development of gestational hypertension (Romm, 2014), so be sure to salt your food to taste with a quality sea salt or Himalayan salt.
- ❖ Essential fatty acids can guard against hypertension: Add walnut oil or safflower oil to your salad, eat fatty deepwater fish (salmon), or take 1000 mg of black currant seed oil daily.
- ❖ Consume plenty of raw garlic.
- ❖ Stay hydrated.

## Additional Resources

[www.preeclampsia.org](http://www.preeclampsia.org)

<https://www.scienceandsensibility.org/p/bl/et/blogid=2&blogaid=589>

## References

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