



## What is Preeclampsia?

Preeclampsia is a condition that can happen during pregnancy or postpartum.

In pregnancy, new high blood pressure, usually after the 20th week, as well as protein in the urine signals to a health care professional that preeclampsia might be present.



### What do I need to know about preeclampsia?

This is manageable and can be treated with blood pressure lowering medications. In some cases baby may need to be delivered sooner than 40 weeks. In most cases preeclampsia disappears within six weeks of delivery, but it is still important to watch for symptoms during the postpartum time.

Women with preeclampsia are more likely to develop high blood pressure, neurologic problems and diabetes later in life. It also increases the risk of heart disease and stroke.

### What are the signs or symptoms of preeclampsia?

Some women don't show signs or don't notice them, but symptoms to note and share with your health care team are:



- ✓ Headaches with unknown cause that don't go away with medication
- ✓ Vision changes
- ✓ Upper abdominal pain
- ✓ Nausea and/or vomiting
- ✓ Shortness of breath
- ✓ Rapid swelling (edema), especially of the feet

## How do I know if I am at risk for preeclampsia?

- ✓ Being pregnant for the first time
- ✓ Having preeclampsia in a past pregnancy
- ✓ Chronic high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease or both
- ✓ Blood clotting problems
- ✓ Being pregnant with more than one baby at a time
- ✓ Getting pregnant through in-vitro fertilization
- ✓ Family history of preeclampsia
- ✓ Being obese
- ✓ Having diabetes
- ✓ Being younger than 18 or older than 35



### What can I do?

- ✓ **Attend all appointments** and set up care soon, if you are newly pregnant.
- ✓ **Low-dose aspirin** can prevent or delay the onset of preeclampsia. Ask your health care professional if this is right for you.
- ✓ **Measure blood pressure** at home if you have been asked to do so. Ask your health care professional when you should contact their office or what numbers signal an emergency for you.
- ✓ **Communicate troubling signs** with your health care team.

### Learn more about:



**Pregnancy**  
[GoRedforWomen.org/Pregnancy](https://GoRedforWomen.org/Pregnancy)



**Postpartum**  
[GoRedforWomen.org/Postpartum](https://GoRedforWomen.org/Postpartum)