

4 Blood Pressure Basics for Pregnant Women

Why Measuring your Blood Pressure while Pregnant is Important

Monitoring blood pressure is a critical part of being pregnant to help screen for dangerous complications including gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia. High blood pressure during pregnancy can also increase the risk of pre-term delivery, low birth weight, and in rare cases maternal stroke, seizure, and death.



Where to Find a Blood Pressure Cuff

You can find blood pressure cuffs for sale at online retailers or at drug stores or pharmacies. Pharmacies also often have a blood pressure measuring cuff where customers can pay for individual readings. Some health insurance companies may help with the cost of blood pressure monitors. Additionally, local health departments, fire stations, and nonprofits may offer free blood pressure readings and access to low cost monitors.



How Long to Monitor your Blood Pressure after Giving Birth

Postpartum hypertension, is usually discovered immediately after childbirth or during a woman's last postpartum checkup (four to six weeks after the baby is delivered). However, hypertension can occur even up to one year after giving birth and may lead to cardiovascular complications.



How to Advocate for Yourself

If you don't understand a term your doctor or care team uses ask them to explain it to you. Take notes or ask if you can record your appointment. If you feel dismissed by your doctor or care team it's okay to seek a second, or even third opinion. Your health insurance can help you find a new doctor.

To find a blood pressure cuff that has been validated for use by pregnant women to self-measure their blood pressure visit [ValidateBP.org](https://www.validatebp.org).

goredforwomen.org/pregnancy