

# High Blood Pressure and Preeclampsia in Pregnancy

## What is it?

High blood pressure or preeclampsia are serious health conditions in pregnancy. High blood pressure can start around 20 weeks of pregnancy, at the end of pregnancy, or even after the birth (postpartum).

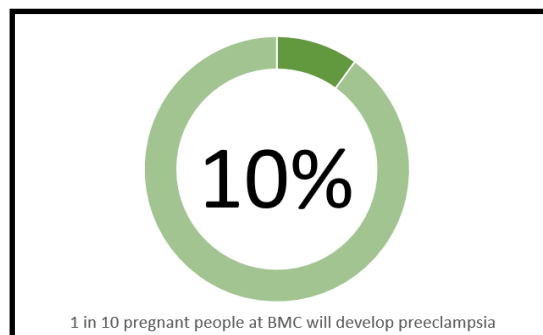
High blood pressure or preeclampsia can harm your body and your baby.

During pregnancy, your body is doing a beautiful job making and sharing extra blood with the baby, helping them grow and be strong. The extra blood is part of what makes a pregnant person's blood pressure go up later in pregnancy. But sometimes it goes up too much. (Higher than 140/90).

## What are the symptoms?

You may have warning signs of high blood pressure or preeclampsia, or no signs. Tell your provider if you do have these signs:

- Bad headaches that don't get better when you take Tylenol
- Visual changes like dark spots or bright flashes in your vision
- Pain in the upper right part of your belly
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New nausea and vomiting after 20 weeks of pregnancy



## What causes high blood pressure or preeclampsia in pregnancy?

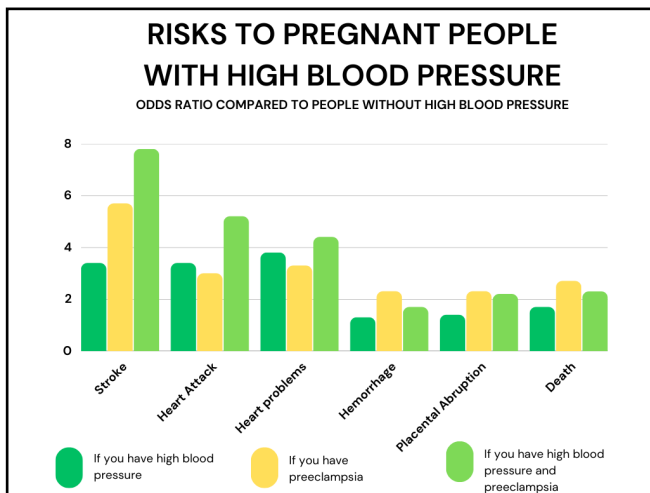
High blood pressure in pregnancy is more common if:

- It's your first pregnancy.
- Your mother or sisters had high blood pressure in pregnancy.
- If you have high blood pressure before pregnancy.
- If you had high blood pressure in another pregnancy.
- If you have diabetes before your pregnancy or during your pregnancy.
- If you are overweight.
- Black women have a higher chance of having high blood pressure. This may be because of racism and other factors that put black women at more risk.

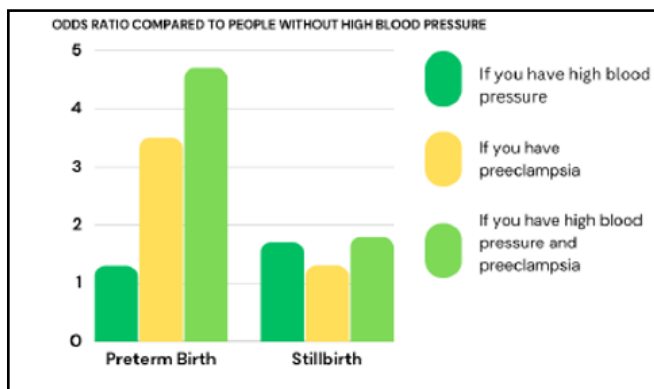
## More Information

### What can happen?

The earlier you know you have high blood pressure or preeclampsia, the safer it is for you and your baby. Blood pressure can go up during pregnancy and at the time of birth. Blood pressure also can be normal during pregnancy and go up too high after the baby is born. If you don't get help, high blood pressure can cause: seizures, strokes, kidney failure, liver damage, slow growth of your baby, problems with your placenta, and stillbirth of your baby.



If your blood pressure is ever high, we will recommend extra tests at that time. High blood pressure and preeclampsia can affect more than your blood pressure. It can also affect the blood, kidneys, and liver.



### What can I do if I have it?

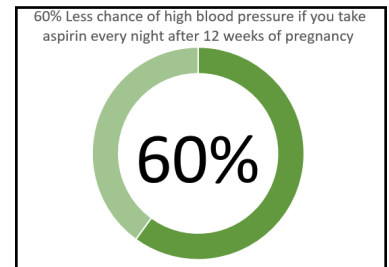
You may be advised to stay in the hospital or even give birth early.

Your provider may recommend earlier birth if your blood pressure rises above a certain level. This means an **induction of labor or C-section**.

Some people with high blood pressure need to stay in the hospital. Some can stay at home but will come in for extra checkups and ultrasounds until it's safe for the baby to be born.

At 37 weeks the baby is no longer premature! Because the baby is ready for birth, if your blood pressure goes up we recommend starting labor.

It is possible for high blood pressure to get worse quickly. It is important to take any symptoms seriously and act! If you have any signs of high blood pressure or preeclampsia in pregnancy call your provider right away!



### Can I prevent it?

**Take aspirin every night** before bed until your baby is born! Aspirin will not lower your blood pressure but can prevent you from getting high blood pressure.

Know your blood pressure! We check your blood pressure at every visit. You may be given a blood pressure cuff to check at home.

There are no tests to check if you will develop high blood pressure during pregnancy.

### Questions?

Call us at 617-414-2000, 24 hours a day with any symptoms or for help!

Scan here to learn more

