

About High Blood Pressure While You Are Pregnant (Gestational Hypertension)



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What is blood pressure?

- Every person must have blood pressure to move blood from the heart to all parts of the body.
- Sometimes this push or force that moves the blood as the heart beats can become too strong, so the blood pressure is too high.

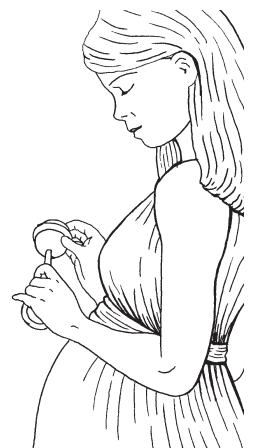
What is Gestational Hypertension?

- Gestational Hypertension is high blood pressure when you are pregnant. It can happen any time during pregnancy but usually happens in the last 2 1/2 months before the baby is born.
- No one knows the exact cause of Gestational Hypertension.

Who can get Gestational Hypertension?

Any pregnant woman can get Gestational Hypertension. But, you have more chance of having Gestational Hypertension if you:

- Have a family history of high blood pressure.
- Are a teenager.
- Are pregnant for the first time.
- Are over thirty years old.
- Have diabetes.
- Are pregnant with twins or triplets.



What happens when you have Gestational Hypertension?

You might have one or more of these symptoms:

- High blood pressure.
- Sudden weight gain.
- Blurred vision or seeing spots.
- Protein in your urine.
- Swelling or puffiness in your fingers, face, or feet.
- Headaches.
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach).
- Pain in your stomach (belly).
- Nose bleeds.

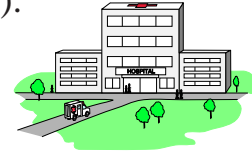


Call your doctor or come to the emergency room if you have:

1. A sudden weight gain (2 pounds or more in a week or 6 pounds in a month).
2. Swelling or puffiness of your fingers, face, hands, or feet.

(over)

3. Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting along with any of these other symptoms.
4. Pain in your upper abdomen (belly).
5. Heartburn along with any of these other symptoms.
6. Seeing spots in front of your eyes, blurring of your vision, or bright lights hurting your eyes.
7. A very bad headache that is not helped by acetaminophen (Tylenol).



What is the treatment?

The best treatment is to deliver your baby, but the baby may still be too small. You may need to stay in the hospital:

- For other treatments, **or**
- Until your baby must be delivered, **or**
- Until delivery is best for both you and your baby.

What things are part of the hospital treatment?



1. Healthy meals 3 times a day.
2. Lessening your activity, or staying in bed (bedrest).
3. Having your blood pressure checked 3-4 times a day.
4. Having the baby's heart beat checked 3 times a day.
5. Checking your weight every day.
6. Having your urine (pee) checked for protein every day.
7. Collecting a 24 hour urine test every week.
8. Having a sonogram every 3 weeks.
9. Having doctor visits and checks every day.
10. Having Non-stress tests 2 or 3 times each week.
11. Counting the baby's kicks 2 times a day.
12. "Getting Ready For Childbirth" classes.
13. Delivery of the baby by C-section or inducing (starting) labor.

What happens if Gestational Hypertension is not treated?

Women who don't get treatment can have seizures, or convulsions (fits) which can:

- Cause serious problems like strokes and hemorrhages (bleeding).
- Lead to coma (being unconscious) and death.

Even though all the reasons for Gestational Hypertension are not known, there is care and treatment that can make your life and that of your baby safer. If you are pregnant, and have, or are at risk for high blood pressure, see your doctor. Follow your doctor's advice.

It is important to keep all your appointments.