



High Blood Pressure During Pregnancy

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Condition Basics

What is high blood pressure?

Blood pressure is a measure of the force of blood against the walls of your arteries. It's normal for blood pressure to go up and down throughout the day. But if it stays up, you have high blood pressure (hypertension). In general, high blood pressure ranges are above 130/80 or 140/90 mm Hg.^{1, 2}

What is high blood pressure during pregnancy?

Usually, blood pressure falls during early pregnancy. Then it goes back to normal by the end of the pregnancy. But some people have high blood pressure (hypertension) while they are pregnant. They may have:

- **Chronic hypertension.** This is high blood pressure that started before pregnancy. It usually doesn't go away after the baby is born.
- **Gestational hypertension.** This is high blood pressure that starts in the second or third trimester. It usually goes away after the baby is born.

High blood pressure during pregnancy may keep the baby from getting enough nutrients and oxygen. This could limit the baby's growth. High blood pressure can also cause the placenta to pull away from the uterus too soon (placental abruption).

Sometimes high blood pressure during pregnancy is a first sign of preeclampsia. This condition can be dangerous for both you and your baby.

What are the symptoms?

High blood pressure usually doesn't cause symptoms. You will probably feel fine, even if your blood pressure is too high. You may not know you have high blood pressure. That's why it's important to go to all of your prenatal checkups and get your blood pressure checked.

How is it diagnosed?

High blood pressure is usually found during a routine prenatal visit. At each visit, your blood pressure is

checked. You may also be checked for other signs of preeclampsia, such as protein in your urine and rapid weight gain. If you have high blood pressure, you'll have regular tests to check your baby's health.

How is high blood pressure during pregnancy treated?

If you have high blood pressure during pregnancy, you'll have frequent blood pressure checks and blood and urine tests. You may need blood pressure medicine. To reduce your risk of preeclampsia, your doctor may recommend taking low-dose aspirin. Your baby will also be checked more often toward the end of your pregnancy.

Credits

Current as of: April 30, 2024

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