

High Blood Pressure during Pregnancy

What is High Blood Pressure during Pregnancy?

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, in pregnancy means your blood pressure is too high. It can affect anyone, anytime. But if your blood pressure stays high during pregnancy, it can start to affect your health and the baby's development. This is called hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDP).

Types of HDP:

- **Chronic Hypertension:** High blood pressure before getting pregnant or before 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- **Gestational Hypertension:** When your blood pressure goes up after the 20th week of pregnancy, but you don't have protein in your urine or other signs of organ damage.
- **Pre-eclampsia:** This happens when you have high blood pressure and protein in your urine after the 20th week of pregnancy. It can affect organs like kidneys and liver and can be serious if not treated.
- **Eclampsia:** This is the most serious form. It's when preeclampsia gets worse and causes seizures or coma. It needs urgent medical attention to keep you and your baby safe.

Risk factors for HDP

- Family history of hypertension
- Previous pregnancy with hypertension, gestational diabetes or pre-eclampsia
- Higher body mass index
- Older age
- Have Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Chinese, African, Melanesian, Polynesian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, South East Asian, Hispanic or South American background
- Environment (toxins)

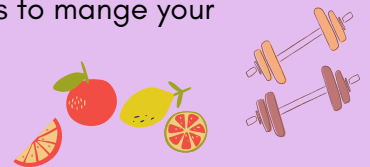
Diagnosis

- Chronic Hypertension: Blood pressure above normal before pregnancy or at first visit.
- Gestational hypertension: Blood pressure above the normal range after 20 weeks.
- Pre-eclampsia: Blood pressure above the normal range with potential harm to organ systems after 20 weeks.

Management

There are several ways to manage your blood pressure.

- Healthy diet
- Physical activity
- Medication



Why manage

Having HDP can increase **your** risk of:

- Pre-eclampsia/eclampsia (fits and seizures)
- Stroke and kidney failure
- Risk of fluid in your lungs
- Diabetes and heart disease

Having HDP can increase **your baby's** risk of:

- Low nutrition
- Being born smaller than usual
- Being delivered sooner than usual

