

Important health advice following high blood pressure in pregnancy

An information leaflet for women
with high blood pressure in
pregnancy that required
treatment



Why has this leaflet been given to you?

This leaflet has been given to you because you have developed either high blood pressure alone or a combination of high blood pressure and protein in your urine (pre-eclampsia) during your pregnancy.

Both of these conditions affect 5-10% of pregnant women. Complications can arise during pregnancy, but also after your pregnancy, with a potential significant impact on your health.

As recommended by NICE, this leaflet describes what those risks are and what you can do to reduce them.

What are the risks to your future health?

Long term health problems

Women who developed high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnancy are at increased risk of long-term health problems compared to women without high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnancy (see table).

COMPLICATIONS	LIKELIHOOD
Heart attack	Twice as likely
Death from heart attack	Twice as likely
High blood pressure requiring long term medication	2-4 times more likely
Type 2 diabetes	2-3 times more likely
Stroke	1.5 times more likely

If you have had pre-eclampsia but your postnatal check at 8 weeks was normal (normal blood pressure and no protein in your urine), you still have a small risk of developing serious kidney disease in later life.

What can you do to reduce these risks to your future health?

These risks may appear frightening, but it is important that you are aware of them and adapt your lifestyle accordingly to minimise your risk.

1. Stop smoking

2. Maintain a healthy weight

- Aim for your BMI to be between 18.5 and 24.9

3. Exercise regularly

- Aim to do 30 minutes of exercise 5 days per week

4. Eat a healthy balanced diet

- Choose brown bread, rice and pasta instead of white
- Reduce sugar, red meat, saturated fat and salt
- Aim to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- Aim to eat at least 2 portions of fish per week
- Aim to eat more unsalted nuts, seeds and pulses per week

What to expect in your next pregnancy?

Most women will not develop complications in their next pregnancy.

However, one in five women who have high blood pressure in a previous pregnancy are likely to develop high blood pressure again in their next pregnancy. In particular, if your baby was born earlier (less than 37 weeks), your risk of developing pre-eclampsia in your next pregnancy can rise to 1 in 3 women.

You are more likely to have high blood pressure in pregnancy or pre-eclampsia if you have 10 or more years between your pregnancies. Your risk may change if you have a different partner in future pregnancies or you have other conditions such as diabetes.

During your next pregnancy, we will advise you take a daily Aspirin from 12 weeks gestation as evidence shows us this can reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure again. You may need to have extra growth scans in your next pregnancy.

If you have had pre-eclampsia in a previous pregnancy, please see your GP before planning to have your next pregnancy to discuss your health and risk factors. You may be referred to the hospital for pre-pregnancy counselling.

Hypertension in pregnancy can be serious. By following the steps above before your next pregnancy, you can improve your health and the outcomes for both you and your baby in future pregnancies.

For more information please visit:



<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>

<https://oneyouleeds.co.uk/about/>

For more advice or to discuss further, please contact your community midwife or GP.



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Developed by: Abigail Sharpe • Obstetric Registrar

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