

Preeclampsia

Fact Sheet



What is preeclampsia?

Preeclampsia is a serious health disorder that affects pregnant people, usually after 20 weeks of pregnancy. It is characterized by high blood pressure or excess protein in the urine.

How is preeclampsia diagnosed?

Preeclampsia is diagnosed when a patient has a blood pressure reading above 140/90 mmHg **and** at least one of the following issues after 20 weeks of pregnancy:

- Liquid in the lungs
- Elevated levels of liver enzymes
- Abnormally low blood platelet count
- Excess protein in the urine, which is known as proteinuria

Because symptoms like blurred vision, severe headaches, and persistent high blood pressure may not appear in the early stages, regular prenatal appointments with a healthcare provider can help detect preeclampsia as soon as possible.



Q: What are some symptoms of preeclampsia?

Symptoms of preeclampsia may include, but are not limited to:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Changes in vision
- Pain in the upper belly, usually under the ribs on the right side

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Who is at risk for preeclampsia?

While the exact cause of preeclampsia is unknown, there are factors that can increase the risk for developing this order during pregnancy. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes
- Pre-existing kidney disease
- Family history of preeclampsia
- Being pregnant for the first time
- Carrying more than one fetus—twins, triplets, or more
- Gestational diabetes—a type of diabetes that develops during pregnancy when blood sugar levels are too high for the body

What are some questions someone can ask their healthcare provider about preeclampsia?

Below are a few questions that can help you start your conversations about preeclampsia with a healthcare provider.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Is my current blood pressure in a normal range? | <input type="checkbox"/> Can preeclampsia impact my heart and long-term health? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How can I safely manage my blood pressure levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> Can preeclampsia affect my liver or kidneys during and after childbirth? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What blood pressure medications are safe to take if needed? | <input type="checkbox"/> What is the follow-up care for preeclampsia after childbirth? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Should I purchase a blood pressure cuff to use at home? | <input type="checkbox"/> When and what type of delivery is recommended for patients with preeclampsia? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How can preeclampsia affect me and my baby's health? | <input type="checkbox"/> What are my risks for postpartum preeclampsia? What signs should I look out for? |