



High blood pressure in pregnancy and pre-eclampsia

Taking care of my heart throughout my life

What Is High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy?

During pregnancy, some women's blood pressure is too high - this is called **hypertension**.

These women may:

- Already have chronic hypertension before pregnancy.
- Develop gestational hypertension in the second half of pregnancy.
- Experience a more serious condition called pre-eclampsia.

GOOD TO KNOW

Do you know your blood pressure numbers ?

Blood pressure is written with two numbers. 140/90 or higher? You may have hypertension. It's recommended to check your blood pressure at least once a year, even if you feel fine.

What Is Preeclampsia?

Pre-eclampsia is a serious pregnancy complication affecting about 1 in 50 women. It is more common during the first pregnancy.

Pre-eclampsia combines **high blood pressure during pregnancy with protein in the urine, meaning the kidneys are affected.**



It can sometimes start after childbirth. This condition can be dangerous for both you and your baby.

What Are my long-term risks ?

Throughout my life, after a hypertensive disorder during pregnancy, I may develop :



High blood pressure



Diabetes



Heart attack



Stroke



Heart failure



Kidney disease

The good news ? I can take action to reduce these risks!

3 simple lifelong habits :

- 1** I see a doctor
- 2** I check my blood pressure
- 3** I adapt my lifestyle

When I adopt a healthy lifestyle, I protect my heart and give myself the best chance of staying healthy.



How do I take care of my heart throughout my life ?

1

I see a doctor regularly, even if I feel fine.

Throughout my life :



- I have **my blood pressure checked at least once a year**, even if I feel fine
- I **talk to healthcare professionals about what happened** during my pregnancy.

If I have high blood pressure :



- I take **my medication as prescribed**.
- I see **my doctor BEFORE** my next pregnancy.

TIPS

Before appointments, I prepare a list of questions. I ask them without hesitation. My loved ones can come with me.

I bring my pregnancy medical records to consultations.

2

I monitor my blood pressure regularly

Throughout my life:



I monitor my blood pressure regularly even if I feel fine

Good news !



I can **check my own blood pressure at home**.
I learn how to do with the Blood Pressure Self-Measurement Guide from the national health insurance

Blood Pressure Self-Measurement Guide



My pharmacist, midwife, or nurse can also check my blood pressure.



MY NEXT PREGNANCY

A next pregnancy is possible! Even though I'm at higher risk of another hypertensive disorder.

I try to plan my next pregnancy and discuss my plans with my doctor before getting pregnant.

If I had preeclampsia, my doctor may prescribe low-dose aspirin to reduce the risk.

How do I take care of my heart throughout my life ?

3

I adapt my lifestyle to protect my heart

To reduce the risk of heart and kidney disease :



I **quit smoking** and **cut back on alcohol**.



I eat **heart-healthy foods, varied and balanced** :

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains and legumes
- Fatty fish
- Nuts and seeds



I **limit salt, sugar, and processed foods** (ready meals, deli meats, etc.).



I gradually **aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity** per day.

I **don't sit for too long**. I take short walks every 2 hours.

And sports ?

Resuming sports should be gradual. Rest is essential for about 6 weeks after childbirth.

It's strongly recommended to see a midwife or doctor for a perineum checkup before resuming sports.

What simple habits for me and my family ?

Find what works for you :



I **take every chance to move**: take the stairs, walk to the shops, push the stroller...



I **schedule physical activity** at a time that suits me : early morning, at the gym, or at home with an app.



I **ask for help and take time for myself**.

I ask my loved ones to look after my baby for a few hours.

After a difficult pregnancy, I may experience **postpartum depression or baby blues**.



I **don't stay alone**.

I talk about it and **ask for help from a doctor**, midwife, psychologist, or a **support group for women** who've had hypertensive disorders.

GROSSESSE SANTE CONTRE LA PRE-ECLAMPSIE

www.grossesse-sante.org

Discover testimonials and advice from women who have experienced preeclampsia



**Grossesse
Santé** contre la
pré-éclampsie



What do I keep doing throughout my life ?

I talk about what happened to me

during pregnancy and with healthcare professionals.

I gave birth on : .../.../...

My baby's birth weight :

During my pregnancies, I had :

- ☐ Pre-eclampsia
- ☐ Eclampsia
- ☐ HELLP Syndrome
- ☐ Hypertension
- ☐ Diabetes
- ☐ Placental abruption
- ☐ Premature birth
- ☐ Low birth weight
- ☐ Stillbirth



What should I monitor ?

I write down :

1



2



3



	Appointments *	My blood pressure	My weight
Discharge from maternity ward	Le .../.../...	/.....	
Dedicated blood pressure appointment	Le .../.../...	/.....	
Postnatal checkup (6-8 weeks)	Le .../.../...	/.....	
Postnatal consultation (6-8 weeks)	Le .../.../...	/.....	
Blood pressure follow-up	Le .../.../...	/.....	
Annual checkup	Le .../.../...	/.....	

* With a general practitioner, a midwife, a gynecologist, a cardiologist or another healthcare professional

True or false ?



I can breastfeed while taking high blood pressure medication. True

Breastfeeding is recommended even if I'm taking high blood pressure medication. It's **beneficial for my baby and me!** It helps with my weight loss and reduces the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and vascular issues.



I feel fine and don't need medication. I just monitor my blood pressure. True

I monitor my blood pressure every year, because even if I don't have hypertension after pregnancy, the **risk of cardiovascular disease increases over time.**



I don't need to take my medication because I don't have symptoms. False

If my doctor prescribed medication for high blood pressure, I take it even if I feel fine. It's good for my heart. And **before my next pregnancy, I see my doctor to review my treatment.**

True or false ?



My child's health comes before mine. False

Of course, my child's health is important, but my health matters too. **Taking care of myself benefits** my whole family. I schedule my baby's appointments without forgetting my own!



It's not my fault if I had high blood pressure or preeclampsia. True

High blood pressure and preeclampsia are **common** and can happen to any woman. By **taking care of my heart, I reduce** the risk of it happening again in my next pregnancy.



High blood pressure is just stress-related. False

Stress isn't the main cause of high blood pressure, but it can make it worse.



My loved ones can play a role. True

Yes! My loved ones can help by looking after my child during medical appointments or coming with me to ask questions. **By involving them in my health journey, they help me maintain a healthy lifestyle.**



GROSSESSE SANTÉ CONTRE LA PRÉ-ECLAMPSIE

www.grossesse-sante.org

Discover testimonials and advice from women who have experienced preeclampsia.



www.youtube.com/@TuoGrossesse

Short, fun videos to better understand preeclampsia and blood pressure monitoring.



La santé, c'est aussi la santé mentale

www.santementale-info-service.fr



www.1000-premiers-jours.fr



www.tabac-info-service.fr

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