Safe Motherhood Initiative

ACOG
THE AMERICAN CONGRESS
OF OBSTETRICIANS
AND GYNECOLOGISTS

District II

Preeclampsia (High Blood Pressure during Pregnancy)

What is Preeclampsia (Pre-e-KLAMP-see-uh)?

High blood pressure can cause problems for you and your unborn baby. It can result in a low birth weight baby, premature delivery of the baby or other more serious problems. High blood pressure can also occur up to six weeks after you have given birth. Uncontrolled blood pressure can be life-threatening so it is also important for you to know the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia (high blood pressure).

What are the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia?

The first sign of preeclampsia is usually high blood pressure. High blood pressure is defined as a blood pressure of either **140** (or higher) top number or **90** (or higher) bottom number. For example: 140/90 ("140 over 90"). **If you have high blood pressure, you may not feel sick** so your healthcare provider will let you know if you have high blood pressure. Along with blood pressure, it is important to watch for other symptoms of preeclampsia so that it can be treated by your doctor and healthcare team quickly and safely.

These signs may include:

- Headache
- Abdominal or stomach pain
- Right upper side pain or tenderness
- Difficulty seeing, or seeing spots before your eyes
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain

- General feeling of sickness
- Difficulty speaking (unable to form words)
- Difficulty moving arms or legs, or weakness on one side of the body
- Numbness or tingling
- Breathlessness

Severe preeclampsia is an emergency. Call your doctor or midwife at once if you are having symptoms. Go to the Emergency Room or call "911" if the symptoms are severe. Treatment must be started as soon as possible. Please keep this important patient information handy.

Contact Number for Any Questions:

How is preeclampsia treated? Treatment may include:

- Reduced activity at home with frequent check-ups
- Monitoring you & baby in the hospital
- Delivering the baby
- Medication to control your blood pressure before and after delivery
- Medication to prevent seizures