



High blood pressure in pregnancy



High blood pressure happens in about 10% of all pregnancies. Many women will not be aware that their blood pressure is high.

This may be the first sign of other changes throughout your body that can affect the wellbeing of both you and your baby.

Some women will have high blood pressure even before pregnancy. This is called chronic hypertension.

Other women may develop high blood pressure during their pregnancy and not show any signs or symptoms of other problems that can occur with high blood pressure. This is called gestational hypertension.

What is pre-eclampsia?

Pre-eclampsia is high blood pressure combined with signs and symptoms such as headaches or eye sight problems, protein in the urine or abnormal test results. It affects women only during pregnancy.

It may temporarily affect the functioning of other parts of your body such as the kidneys, liver, the way your blood is able to clot or your placenta (which feeds your baby).

Some women may have high blood pressure but not develop any symptoms at all, while others may develop one or more symptoms such as:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision, visual disturbances such as spots or stars in front of your eyes.

Blood pressure profile assessment

We will carry out a blood pressure profile assessment if your pregnancy is greater than 20 weeks and you:

- have a blood pressure reading above 140/90 or significantly higher than a previously high recording
- show symptoms of having elevated blood pressure, such as feeling dizzy, have blurred vision, headaches and/or visual disturbances
- have protein in your urine.

The assessments are usually conducted in the Fetal Maternal Assessment Unit (FMAU) located next to the Birth Unit at Nepean Hospital.

What will happen at the assessment?

- A midwife will take your blood pressure once an hour for a total of four hours.
- You will have a blood test and be asked to provide a urine sample.
- A CTG (electronic monitoring) will be conducted to check the welfare of your baby.
- A doctor will review the results from your assessment and make an appropriate care plan with you.

The assessment usually takes between 4.5-5 hours. You will need to remain seated in the FMAU until the assessment is finished to ensure the most accurate results.

Blood pressure profile assessments commence at 10am 7 days a week.

Contact Information

Nepean Hospital Birth Unit

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