

# How to Avoid Preeclampsia

## *Suggestions for Prevention*



Preeclampsia is considered a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy. Hypertensive disorders are the most common cause of medical complications in pregnancy. Preeclampsia may develop after 20 weeks gestation and up through 6 weeks postpartum. If preeclampsia is suspected, your midwife may order blood work to get lab values to help you and her "see" whether or not you have preeclampsia. A physician referral is offered if you are diagnosed with preeclampsia.

*Symptoms may strike quickly.*

*Report any symptoms to your midwife immediately.*

### Risk Factors for Preeclampsia:

- First pregnancy
- First pregnancy with new partner
- Obesity
- History of preeclampsia
- Older than 40 years old
- Multiples
- Interval between pregnancies: < 2 years apart or > 10 years apart
- Certain health conditions:
  - Chronic high blood pressure
  - Migraine headaches
  - Type 1 or type 2 diabetes
  - Kidney disease
  - Lupus
  - Tendency to develop blood clots

### Symptoms you can watch for:

- Pain in upper right abdomen
- Chest pain
- Shoulder/neck pain
- Headache
- Swelling – particularly in face and hands
- Sudden weight gain
- Nausea/vomiting
- Elevated blood pressure
- Protein in your urine
- Elevated reflexes
- Changes in your vision
- Shortness of breath
- Uterus is small for your due date
- Low amniotic fluid
- Elevated lab values for preeclampsia
- Preeclampsia may develop with NO symptoms

### *Facts:*

- Preeclampsia affects 5-8% of all pregnancies
- Preeclampsia develops in 15-25% of women initially diagnosed with gestational hypertension
- Preeclampsia may develop into eclampsia – grand mal seizures
- Delivery is the only cure for preeclampsia

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## Foods to Consider

- Very ripe cucumber; 1/2 cup juiced daily or eat a whole one
- Watermelon
- Celery
- Buckwheat
- Raw garlic
- Parsley and onions
- Ingest 2 Tbsp of good olive oil daily
- Drink 2 oz unsweetened pomegranate juice daily diluted with 8 oz water
- Eggs, daily
- Whole stewed chicken with veggies
- Super high-potency protein drinks (www.seekinghealth.com)
- NO junk/processed foods



## Risks of Preeclampsia:

- Developing seizures
- Stroke
- Organ damage
- Premature birth
- Death

## Resources:

Preeclampsia.org:

<http://www.preeclampsia.org/health-information/hellp-syndrome>

## Reference:

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## How to Avoid Preeclampsia:

While we are still learning more about what causes preeclampsia, we do have some suggestions for maintaining your health in an effort to avoid developing preeclampsia:

- Low-dose aspirin and calcium are the only two clinically proven methods for prevention – talk with your midwife before beginning any supplements or medications
- Exercise for 30 minutes each day
- Salt your food to taste – we recommend sea salt
- Work to reduce anxiety and stress in your life
- Be sure that you are taking in adequate amounts of vitamin B6, vitamin D, magnesium, fish oil, choline, and folate in your diet
- Drink half your weight in ounces of water each day
- If your midwife requests, monitor your blood pressure several times a day
- Seek alternative therapies for hypertension, such as chiropractic, acupuncture, massage, etc.

## Possible causes of Preeclampsia:

- Insufficient blood flow to the uterus
- Damage to the blood vessels
- A problem with the immune system
- Certain genes