



## Postpartum Preeclampsia

### WHAT IS PREECLAMPSIA?

Preeclampsia is persistent high blood pressure that develops during pregnancy or the postpartum period. It can occur before and after delivery. People with preeclampsia experience high blood pressure, protein in their urine, swelling, headaches, and blurred vision. It can affect different organs in the body and be dangerous for mom and her baby. When you have preeclampsia your blood pressure levels are elevated above 140/90 mmHg, this will put stress on your heart and can cause serious complications.

## **WHAT IS POSTPARTUM PREECLAMPSIA?**

Postpartum Preeclampsia is when you develop preeclampsia after your baby is born. It typically happens within two days after giving birth but can also develop several weeks later, even people who never had preeclampsia can develop postpartum preeclampsia.

The exact cause is unknown, medical providers know that certain factors increase your risk. It is estimated to impact 6-8% of pregnancies and postpartum. Postpartum Preeclampsia is more common in black women, women over 40 and teens, it is a very serious medical condition that can progress quickly, and the aftermath can be deadly.

Be sure to share your medical history with your doctor. Tell your doctor of any irregular symptoms you're having on your prenatal and postnatal visit.

## **SIGNS OF POSTPARTUM PREECLAMPSIA**

- High blood pressure (140/90 mmHg or higher).
- High levels of protein in your urine
- Severe headaches
- Changes in vision, blurred vision or light sensitivity
- Swelling of your face, hands, feet or limbs
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain, usually near your ribs
- Decreased urination
- Rapid weight gain
- Shortness of breath

Postpartum Preeclampsia can lead to strokes, seizures, and other complications if not treated quickly. It will not go away on its own and requires immediate attention, if not treated quickly postpartum preeclampsia can lead to permanent brain, liver, or kidney damage. Excess fluids in your lungs known as (pulmonary edema), stroke, blood clots, HELLP Syndrome and death.

Postpartum Preeclampsia is treated with blood pressure medicine to lower your pressure levels. Antiseizure medicine, such as magnesium sulfate to prevent seizures, anticoagulant (blood thinner) medications to lower the risk of blood clots.

## **PREVENTION**

There is no way to avoid or prevent postpartum preeclampsia, the only thing you can do report any symptoms to your doctor.

## **LIVING WITH**

Postpartum Preeclampsia can last several days or weeks, it can also take weeks for your medication to lower your blood pressure level. Once it is lowered your risk for complications is lessens. Postpartum recovery is hard on your body, it is indeed hard to meet the needs of your baby and yourself. But if you are diagnosed with preeclampsia you may have to stay in the hospital a little longer to be monitored. Rest as much as you can and try to focus on your health, ask for help whenever possible. Once you've had postpartum preeclampsia, you are at risk for getting it again. Be sure to let your doctor know of any history with preeclampsia during your previous pregnancies. Keep all doctor appointments prenatal and postnatal are extremely important.

## **WHAT CAN HELP WITH POSTPARTUM PREECLAMPSIA?**

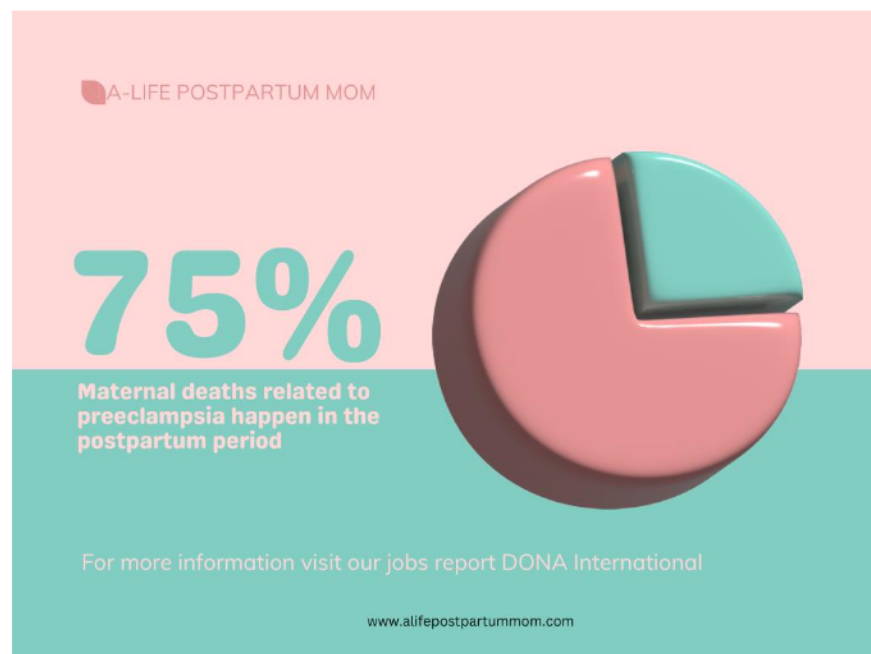
- Rest lying on your left side to take weight off your major blood vessels.
- Consume less salty foods and caffeinated drinks
- Drink lots of water/ keep water bottle close
- Eat food with high water content such as cucumber, salads, soups etc.
- Diets with magnesium may reduce the risk with high blood pressure, you doctor can determine if magnesium should be prescribed.

## **TRUTH MOMENT**

Postpartum Preeclampsia is real and deadly, during my pregnancy my blood pressure was normal, at times it would go up and down but overall, I maintained a normal blood pressure level. When I gave birth, it was normal after being transported to my room for recovery my blood pressure was high. The nurses switched arms and took my pressure over and it came back still high. The rest of my hospital stay my blood pressure level would fluctuate, the day I was discharged to go home the nurse took my blood pressure and it was normal. When I got home from the hospital the first day, I felt fine minus the exhaustion from no sleep. Two days later is when I started to feel lightheaded and my fingers, and ankles down to my feet were swollen. My baby was now five days old; I knew something was wrong I took my pressure at home; the reading was 155/120mmHg. I knew I had to get back to the emergency room. This is were having a strong support

system comes into place. I immediately called my mom and best friend; she came over to watch my newborn. When I got back to the hospital, they asked me how I was able to function with my blood pressure so high. The doctors began to explain I could easily have a seizure right now. I was admitted back to the birthing recovery floor and given an IV. My pressure was still extremely high the doctors explained they would not let me leave the hospital until it was under control. I worried about my new baby, I was a new breastfeeding mom, I worried did he have enough milk. My breast was so full of milk it was painful. The nurses brought me a pump and allowed me to store my milk. My friend had to work the next morning she stayed through the night with my baby then my mom came to relieve her at five o'clock in the morning. I was so upset with myself, but the doctors told me there is nothing I could have done to prevent this from happening. I worried could my mom 78 years old handle a new baby for another 24 hrs. The doctors suggested my mom and the baby coming to the hospital to stay with me. It sounded good but I knew my mom would not have been able to handle the travel with him and a car seat. So, I demanded they check me out the hospital so I could get back to my baby. Every doctor and nurse on the floor came in my room to convince me to change my mind. My decision was made, I knew my mom could not make it with a brand-new baby, no sleep and no more milk. My medical team said they were not comfortable letting me walk out the door in this condition. They prescribed medication as an alternative and told me they would be checking on me daily and to please follow up with my doctor.

Mount Sinai Upper East Side was a great hospital they did check on me almost daily for over a week, my doctor prescribed an alternate medication to help me. I eventually did not need to take medication anymore. I completely changed my diet and consumed lots of fluids, getting rest was very hard with a new baby.



## **Helpful Tips**

**Stay hydratedaaa**

**Rest**

**Take OTC painkillers**

*A-Life Postpartum Mom does not offer medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. The resources provided on our website is for informational purposes only. We are not medical professionals, and you should always consult with your doctor for diagnosis.*

### **Sources:**

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