

Postnatal hypertension (high blood pressure) in pregnancy



Information for women during pregnancy,
attending appointments at King's College
Hospital only

During your pregnancy you were diagnosed with

To make sure you stay well after your pregnancy, we have arranged an appointment for you in the **Blood Pressure Clinic, Suite 8, 3rd floor, Golden Jubilee Wing**

on

at

Please check with your midwife if you need to do anything before you come to this appointment.

If you cannot make this appointment, please rearrange it by calling us on: **020 3299 3246, option 1.**



Why do I need to come back to the Blood Pressure Clinic?

If you have had blood pressure problems during pregnancy, you have a greater risk of health problems in future pregnancies and in later life.

But you can greatly reduce this risk by making healthy lifestyle choices and having regular check-ups.

For most women this appointment is to check that everything is back to what is normal for you, and to talk to you about how you can make healthy choices.

But sometimes having high blood pressure during pregnancy reveals a problem that you did not know you had, especially with your kidneys.

So at this appointment, we will offer to check your blood pressure and urine, and take some blood tests to check your kidney and liver function and your iron levels. If we find any problems with any of your results, we can make sure you have any tests you need, and refer you to the right doctors to look after you. This will help you to stay as healthy as possible.

Will I get high blood pressure in my next pregnancy?

If you have had blood pressure problems in one pregnancy, you have a greater risk of similar complications in future pregnancies.

The risk of these happening in any future pregnancies depend on how severe your problem was and how many weeks pregnant you were when you were diagnosed.

- If it started late in your pregnancy (after 37 weeks) and it was not severe, the risk of this happening again is about 10%.



- If it started early and had a severe effect on your pregnancy, the risk of this happening again is about 40%.

What can I do?

- When you come to your postnatal appointment, we will talk to you about your high blood pressure problem during your pregnancy and you can ask us any questions you may have. We will also tell you if there is anything you can do before you become pregnant again.
- If you get pregnant again, please make sure you see your GP (home doctor) as soon as possible and tell them about the problems you have had this time.
- Stay healthy – see page 4 for advice.

Will I have high blood pressure when I am older?

If you have had blood pressure problems in pregnancy you have a greater risk of having certain health problems later in life, especially if you had your baby before 37 weeks. These problems are:

Chronic hypertension	=	long-term high blood pressure
Venous thromboembolism	=	blood clots that can move to your heart or lungs
Cardiovascular disease	=	problems with your heart and your blood vessels
Cerebrovascular disease	=	problems with the blood vessels in your brain
Renal disease	=	problems with your kidneys

You may have a greater risk of having a stroke or heart attack if you get any of these problems. But you may be able to cut this risk if you have regular check-ups and make healthy lifestyle choices.



Staying healthy

What can I do now?

Make sure your blood pressure is well controlled. This will reduce your chance of complications now and in the future. So make sure you:

- Follow the plan for blood pressure checks with your midwife, GP and Blood Pressure Clinic
- Take your medications as advised. If you have any questions or you run out of medicines, speak to your GP or the team at the Blood Pressure Clinic
- Come to your Blood Pressure Clinic appointments regularly.

What can I do long-term?

There are lots of things you can do to try and stay healthy. They are even more important now you have had a pregnancy with blood pressure problems. Talk to your GP if you need help with any of these.

- Do regular exercise
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Do not drink too much alcohol
- Keep to a healthy weight (BMI of less than 25)
- Do not smoke
- If you are diabetic, make sure you keep your blood sugars within your targets
- Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked at least once a year.



How do I contact the Blood Pressure Clinic?

The clinic is open Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm

Appointments, tel: **020 3299 3246**, option 1

Queries, tel: **07896 536842**

If your query is urgent and there is no answer or it is out of hours, please contact the Nightingale Birth Centre on **020 3299 3222**.

Research

We often run research projects to try and improve our knowledge of – and treatments for – blood pressure problems in pregnancy, and we may ask you to take part. We will always explain what is involved beforehand. If you decide not to take part, your care will not be affected by your decision.

More information

Action on Pre-eclampsia

Helpline Tel: 020 8427 4217

www.action-on-pre-eclampsia.org.uk

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.



PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleden Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net**

**You can also contact us by using our online form at
www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals**

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.



