

## What happens if I have High Blood Pressure?

### What is your Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is a measurement of the pressure of your blood as it is pumped around your body. Two measurements are recorded; firstly, the pressure of the blood in the heart as it pumps the blood around your body and secondly, the pressure of the blood as the heart relaxes.

This measurement would be recorded like this for example, 120 / 70

The first number is the pressure of the blood as the heart is pumping and the second number is the pressure when the heart relaxes.

### What is high blood pressure?

We would be concerned if your second number was 90 or above on **TWO** occasions (More than 60 minutes apart) or 110 on **ONE** occasion, also if the first number was above 160

High blood pressure is also known as hypertension

There are 3 types of high blood pressure:

- Chronic hypertension –Raised blood pressure before pregnancy or where it is found before 20 weeks of pregnancy
- Gestational hypertension –Raised blood pressure during pregnancy without protein in the urine.
- Pre-eclampsia -Raised blood pressure with protein in your urine during pregnancy.

### What do I look for?

You may experience a combination of:

- bad headache
- problems with vision - such as blurring or flashing before the eyes
- bad pain just below the ribs
- vomiting
- sudden swelling of face, hands or feet

If you think you have these symptoms you should seek immediate medical advice because you could be at risk of further complications. **Please call 0151 708 9988, and ask for the shift leader on the central delivery suite,** who will advise you what to do next.

### What will happen if you are found to have high blood pressure at your community or hospital antenatal clinic

Your midwife or doctor will also test a sample of your urine for protein. The amount of protein in your urine will be recorded as a trace, 1+, 2++, and 3+++.  
Your care will depend on both your blood pressure and urine results.

- If your blood pressure is normal and there is not more than a trace of protein present in your urine then you will continue with your normal antenatal care.

- If your blood pressure is raised and you have a trace of protein, or your blood pressure is normal but you have more than 1+ of protein arrangements will be, made for you to attend the **Obstetric Assessment Unit** (OAU), the following day.
- If your blood pressure is raised and there is more than one + of protein arrangements would be made for you to attend the OAU on the same day if possible before 4pm.
- If it were after 4pm arrangements would be made for you to attend the **Assessment Room** on the Central Delivery Suite.
- If your blood pressure is significantly raised for example 160/110, you have protein in your urine or if you have any of the symptoms listed below, arrangements would be made for you to be admitted immediately to the antenatal ward.

**What will happen if I need to attend the Obstetric Assessment Unit?**

- The midwife will ask you for a sample of your urine and she will test it for protein.
- You will be asked some questions about how you feel and if you have any symptoms
- Your midwife will perform an abdominal palpation to feel your baby and listen to your baby's heartbeat
- Your blood pressure will then be recorded every 15 minutes for an hour.
- Your midwife may ask you for another sample of urine at this stage to send off to the laboratory for testing.

**What happens next depends upon the results of all the above tests.**

**If your series of blood pressure recordings are within normal limits and there is a trace or less of protein in your urine**

- You will be able to go home.
- The midwife will make arrangements for you to see your community midwife in a week's time.

**If your series of blood pressure recordings are raised and you have a trace or less of protein in your urine and all other findings are normal**

- You will have some blood tests performed.
- A scan will be performed.
- You will be asked to contact the Obstetric Assessment Unit on **0151 702 4164** the next day for the results of your blood tests. If the next day falls over a weekend or Bank Holiday you will be given a contact number and time to phone The Assessment Room on Central Delivery Suite.
- An appointment will be made for you to return to the Obstetric Assessment Unit in 3-4 days for another blood pressure series.

**If your blood pressure recordings are normal but you have 1+ of protein in your urine**

- Your care would be the same as above, but you would be asked to take a container home to collect all the urine you pass in the next 24-hours.

- You will be given an appointment to return with your 24-hour urine collection and this will then be tested in the laboratory.

### **If your blood pressure is raised and you have 1+ or more of protein in your urine**

- You will have some blood tests performed.
- A scan will be performed.
- You will start a 24-hour urine collection
- You will be admitted to the antenatal ward in the hospital.
- Your results and care will be discussed with you.
- If you are more than 37 week pregnant you may be advised to have your labour 'started off' (induced) within 48 hours. However, if you are less than 37 weeks pregnant you will be admitted to the antenatal ward.
- If your blood pressure is raised and you have a small amount of protein in your urine (but there are no other symptoms) you will have some blood taken. This is to check if you are anaemic and to check for chemicals in your blood. This will help the doctor assess if your high blood pressure is causing any problems for you or your baby. You may have a scan and providing all is well you may be allowed home. Some women may be asked to return in 2-3 days and have the blood tests repeated and also another scan, depending on the results you may be admitted for further tests.
- If your blood pressure is raised and you have one plus or more of protein in your urine you will be admitted to the antenatal ward. If you are more than 37 weeks pregnant we may advise that you have labour 'started off' (induced).
- If however you are less than 37 weeks pregnant you will be admitted to the antenatal ward as an in patient and a senior doctor will review your condition each day. **There is a leaflet called 'High Blood Pressure requiring admission to hospital' which you may find useful**

This information is not intended to replace discussion with either medical or midwifery staff. If you have any questions regarding the contents of this leaflet please discuss this with a midwife or obstetrician. The hospital is involved in research and you might be asked to consider taking part in a research study. A midwife or doctor will discuss this with you and answer any questions that you may have.

### **Further information**

The Association for Pre-Eclampsia (APEC) is a national charity that helps to provide information about pre-eclampsia:

Their address is;

APEC, 84-88 Pinner Road,  
HARROW, Middlesex,  
HA1 4HZ, England, UK

**Tel:** 020 8863 3271

**Fax:** 020 8424 0653

**e-mail:** [enquiries@apec.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@apec.org.uk)

**Helpline:** 020 8427 4217 (weekdays 10am - 1pm)

Visit Web site on [www.apec.org.uk](http://www.apec.org.uk).

For further information there is a list of useful web sites which can be found on the Liverpool Women's Hospital web site.

Go to

[www.lwh.org.uk](http://www.lwh.org.uk)

Click on



Support & Information



Useful organisations

If you require any advice about the information on the web sites please speak to a midwife or doctor at the hospital or a community midwife at the GP surgery

*This information was generated from The Women's Information Network Group in the Liverpool Women's Hospital.*

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