

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS
RESEARCH SUMMARY

TOPIC: DOES HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE IN PREGNANCY HURT YOUR HEART
YEARS LATER?

REPORT: **MB #4950**

PREECLAMPSIA/HEART DISEASE BACKGROUND: Preeclampsia is a complication due to pregnancy. It causes the patient to have high blood pressure and can also cause damage to the liver and kidneys. After 20 weeks of pregnancy patients could start to show symptoms of preeclampsia. If untreated, preeclampsia can lead to serious and possibly fatal complications for that patient and baby. Several factors can cause preeclampsia, including: insufficient blood flow to the uterus, damage to blood vessels, immune deficiencies, and certain genes. The risk factors for preeclampsia are: history of preeclampsia, chronic hypertension, first pregnancy, new paternity, age, race, obesity, multiple pregnancy such as twins or triplets, interval between pregnancies, history of certain conditions, and in vitro fertilization.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/preeclampsia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355745>)

PREECLAMPSIA/HEART DISEASE DIAGNOSING: Preeclampsia can develop without any symptoms which is why it is important to regularly check your blood pressure if you are pregnant. High blood pressure can develop slowly or come on rapidly. Blood pressure that is over 140/90 or greater is abnormal and the patient should call their health care provider. Other symptoms or signs of preeclampsia are excess protein in your urine (proteinuria) or additional signs of kidney problems, severe headaches, changes in vision, including temporary loss of vision, blurred vision or light sensitivity, upper abdominal pain, usually under your ribs on the right side, nausea or vomiting, decreased urine output, decreased levels of platelets in your blood (thrombocytopenia), impaired liver function, shortness of breath caused by fluid in your lungs.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/preeclampsia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355745>)

PREECLAMPSIA/HEART DISEASE NEW RESEARCH: Pregnant women with preeclampsia are more likely to later develop heart failure than those who do not have blood pressure-related pregnancy complications. A new study on 500,000 Norwegian women found that women with preeclampsia are twice as likely to develop heart failure. Those who develop preeclampsia in more than one pregnancy are four times more likely to have heart failure. The women who were studied had their first birth between 1980 and 2004 and were followed through 2009. High blood pressure is common among pregnant women and can lead to the need to induce labor, pre-term delivery, stroke, seizures, or coma for the mother. This new information is important because pregnant women need to be aware of the signs that they may be developing preeclampsia and talk with their healthcare providers immediately. Monitoring their blood pressure and being aware of quickly developing swelling in the lower extremities of the body are two signs that a patient may have preeclampsia.

(Source: <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2020/08/24/preeclampsia-may-double-a-womans-chances-for-later-heart-failure>)

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