

# High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy

South Shore  
Regional Hospital

# High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy

- For most people, a normal blood pressure (BP) is 140/90 (140 over 90) or less. High blood pressure in pregnancy (also called **gestational hypertension**) is a BP that stays higher than 140/90.
- After week 20 of your pregnancy, a high BP can be linked to **pre-eclampsia**. This is a more serious condition that includes a high BP and protein in the urine (pee).
- Pre-eclampsia puts you at a higher risk for seizures, strokes, and long-term health problems. It also puts your baby at a higher risk for stillbirth, pre-term birth, and a low birth weight.
- **Pre-eclampsia can be dangerous to you and your baby.**
  - › Monitor your BP and symptoms (see page 2) closely.
  - › Your primary health care provider (family doctor or midwife) may recommend other tests (like blood work or ultrasounds).

If you have a high BP, watch for these symptoms:

- › Headache
- › Vision problems (like spots, blurring, or shaky vision)
- › Pain in the upper stomach area
- › Swelling of the hands and face
- › Nausea (upset stomach) and/or vomiting (throwing up)
- › Chest pain
- › Shortness of breath
- **If you have 1 or more of the above symptoms, check your BP.**

## **Checking your BP at home**

- **For 30 minutes before checking your BP:**
  - › **Do not** have caffeine (like coffee, tea) or nicotine (like smoking, vaping).
  - › **Do not** exercise.
- **For 15 minutes before checking your BP:**
  - › Rest.
- Sit with your feet resting on the floor. **Do not** cross your legs.
- Support your arm at the level of your heart.

**Call the OBS Clinic, OBS Unit, or on-call midwife right away if:**

- You have 2 BP readings 15 minutes apart with either:
  - › The top number above 140
  - or**
  - › The bottom number above 90.
  - or**
- You are having any of the symptoms on page 2.

**You can call the OBS Clinic, OBS Unit, or Midwifery Team any time if you have questions or concerns about your pregnancy.**

**OBS Clinic**

- › Phone: 902-527-1180
- › Hours: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday

**OBS Unit**

- › Phone: 902-527-5214
- › The OBS Unit is **always** open.

**Midwifery Team**

- › Phone: 902-543-4603
- › Ask for the on-call midwife.

Use this sheet to keep track of your BP.

Date and Time	BP

Date and Time	BP

## Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](https://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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