



# PRE- ECLAMPSIA

Pre-eclampsia is a condition of high blood pressure present before pregnancy (chronic) or develops during pregnancy (gestational, pregnancy-induced). This is also called hypertension. If you have pre-eclampsia, you will also have excess protein in your urine. This protein can be detected with a test, given by your doctor. Development of pre-eclampsia can cause serious and potentially life-

threatening complications during labor.

## *How does pre-eclampsia affect you and your baby?*

- ◇ Decreases the amount of air and nutrients that your baby receives
- ◇ Can causes low birth weight, premature birth, or even stillbirth
- ◇ Placenta can separate from the uterine wall before delivery (placental abruption)
- ◇ Can damage your baby's heart, kidney, liver, brain, and eye
- ◇ Can cause problems with blood clotting

- ◇ Can lead to eclampsia

## *What is eclampsia?*

If pre-eclampsia is not treated, you could develop eclampsia. Eclampsia may cause you to experience:

- ◇ Headaches
- ◇ Muscle pain
- ◇ Seizures
- ◇ Loss of consciousness



## RISK FACTORS

If you have any of these characteristics or conditions, you have an increased risk for pre-eclampsia. That doesn't mean that you necessarily will develop pre-eclampsia. To catch the condition early, you should speak with your doctor if you are at all concerned.

- ◇ Pre-eclampsia in a previous pregnancy
- ◇ Pregnant with first child
- ◇ Younger than 20 or older than 40
- ◇ Previously obese
- ◇ Carrying multiple fetuses
- ◇ Chronic high blood pressure
- ◇ Diabetes

- ◇ Kidney disease
- ◇ Rheumatoid arthritis
- ◇ Lupus

*What are some signs that you may have pre-eclampsia?*

- ◇ Sudden, rapid weight gain
- ◇ Swelling of your face or hands
- ◇ Severe or constant headaches
- ◇ Vision problems, including blurred vision
- ◇ Pain in the upper part of the abdomen, especially on the right side

- ◇ Decreased urine output

## SCREENING AND TREATMENT

Going regularly to your prenatal visits is the best way to track blood pressure and protein in your urine.

*If you're worried you may have pre-eclampsia, talk to your doctor about getting screened and managing the condition. Only your doctor can confirm whether or not you have this condition.*

Ask your doctor if you are at risk for pre-eclampsia. If you have pre-eclampsia, the

only “cure” is to deliver your baby. If the pre-eclampsia occurs later in your pregnancy, you may have to have an early delivery. If pre-eclampsia develops early, you may need to remain in the hospital for sustained monitoring. Your doctor may give you medications to prolong your pregnancy, reduce your blood pressure, or prevent seizures.

Make sure you talk through all the possible complications with your doctor, and incorporate these possibilities into your birth plan. If you have complications resulting from pre-eclampsia during delivery, the doctors may decide to transport you to Sioux Falls.

If you have pre-eclampsia, talk to your doctor and any friends or family that may have personal experience with pre-

eclampsia. Being prepared and talking through pre-eclampsia with your doctor is the best way to make sure you and your baby are safe.