



Maternal Heart Health

PREGNANCY & YOUR HEART

Healthy Moms. Stronger Families. Brighter Tomorrows.

Pregnancy is a beautiful journey, but it also puts extra stress on your heart. Knowing the risks, recognizing warning signs and speaking up for your health can help protect you and your baby — during pregnancy and after birth.

HOW PREGNANCY AFFECTS YOUR HEART

During pregnancy, your body works harder to support your growing baby. These changes are normal, but they can increase the risk of certain heart-related complications.



Blood volume increases by 30–50%

Your heart has to pump more blood.



Heart rate increases 10–20 beats per minute

Your heart works harder.



Blood vessels change

Hormones cause blood vessels to relax, which can affect blood pressure.



Your body retains more fluid

This can lead to swelling, which is sometimes normal.



Underlying conditions may be revealed or worsen

Such as high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease.

POSSIBLE HEART-RELATED PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS

These conditions can happen before, during or after pregnancy:



Preeclampsia

High blood pressure after 20 weeks of pregnancy, often with signs of organ stress.



Gestational hypertension

High blood pressure that develops during pregnancy.



Peripartum cardiomyopathy

A rare condition where the heart becomes enlarged and weakened.



Arrhythmias

(Abnormal heart rhythm)
Can occur during pregnancy or postpartum.



Blood clots

(Pulmonary embolism)
More likely during and after pregnancy.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Maternal heart complications can happen to anyone — even women who were healthy before pregnancy. Many of these conditions can be treated when found early. Trust your instincts and speak up if something doesn't feel right.

Your Heart Matters Too.



AFTER BABY — THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Your risk for heart-related complications doesn't end after delivery. Many serious conditions can develop in the weeks and months postpartum. Continue to monitor your health, attend your follow-up appointments and seek care if you notice any concerning symptoms.



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Your Health Matters.
Your Life Matters.

WARNING SIGNS: WHEN TO SEEK URGENT CARE

If you experience any of the following symptoms during pregnancy or up to one year after delivery, seek medical attention immediately. These could be signs of a serious heart-related condition.



**Chest pain
or pressure**



**Shortness
of breath**
at rest or with
minimal activity



**Severe or
persistent
headache**



Vision changes
(blurred vision,
seeing spots)



**Sudden or severe
swelling in the
face, hands
or feet**



**Rapid or
irregular
heartbeat**
(palpitations)



**Dizziness
or fainting**

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Regularly monitoring key health numbers can help catch problems early.



Blood Pressure

Know your normal range. High blood pressure can develop during or after pregnancy.



Heart Rate

Be aware of what is normal for you and report significant changes.



Weight and Swelling

Rapid weight gain or sudden swelling can be a warning sign.



Blood Sugar

Monitor if you have gestational diabetes or are at risk.



Cholesterol

Discuss screening with your healthcare provider, especially if you have other risk factors.

ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF

You know your body best. Don't be afraid to speak up and ask questions.

- ☐ Share your full medical and family history.
- ☐ Tell your provider about any past pregnancy complications.
- ☐ Ask about your risk for heart-related conditions.
- ☐ Request regular blood pressure checks during pregnancy and postpartum.
- ☐ Discuss any symptoms, even if they seem minor.
- ☐ Ask about postpartum follow-up, especially if you had high blood pressure, preeclampsia or other complications.
- ☐ Bring a list of your questions to appointments.
- ☐ Take a support person with you if possible.
- ☐ Trust your instincts — if something doesn't feel right, seek another opinion.

TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HEART DURING & AFTER PREGNANCY



Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.



Stay active as recommended by your healthcare provider.



Avoid tobacco, vaping and limit or avoid alcohol.



Get enough rest and manage stress.



Attend all prenatal and postpartum appointments.



Follow your provider's guidance for long-term heart health.



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For educational purposes only. This information does not replace individualized medical advice.

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