



American Heart Association.  
Outpace CVD™

# QUICK GUIDE

An Outpace CVD™ Resource

## Conditions of Pregnancy

Hypertension of Pregnancy and Gestational Diabetes



# QUICK GUIDE



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## Conditions of Pregnancy

Maternal health matters. Pregnancy-related conditions can have negative effects for both the mother and fetus/neonate antepartum and postpartum. High blood pressure during pregnancy and gestational diabetes are both associated with an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease later in life.<sup>1</sup>

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## How to use...

This Quick Guide will provide you with an overview of two conditions of pregnancy that can have long-term impacts on maternal health: hypertension of pregnancy and gestational diabetes.

### Included:

- [Hypertension of Pregnancy](#)
  - *What is it?*
  - *Self-Measured Blood Pressure (SMBP) Monitoring*
- [Gestational Diabetes](#)
  - *What is it?*
  - *At-Home Glucose Monitoring*
- [Resources](#)
- [Key Takeaways](#)
- [References](#)

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<sup>1</sup> American Heart Association, "Six Pregnancy Complications Are among Red Flags for Heart Disease Later in Life," accessed September 16, 2025, [https://newsroom.heart.org/news/six-pregnancy-complications-are-among-red-flags-for-heart-disease-later-in-life?preview=6d1b&preview\\_mode=True](https://newsroom.heart.org/news/six-pregnancy-complications-are-among-red-flags-for-heart-disease-later-in-life?preview=6d1b&preview_mode=True).

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# Hypertension of Pregnancy

Per the [2025 Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults](#), hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDP) are strongly associated with both maternal and fetal/neonatal complications. They are also a leading cause of pregnancy-associated mortality.<sup>2</sup>

## Types of High Blood Pressure During Pregnancy<sup>3</sup>

- [Chronic Hypertension](#) – High blood pressure diagnosed prepartum or up to 20 weeks during pregnancy.
- [Gestational Hypertension](#) – High blood pressure that develops after 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- [Preeclampsia](#) – High blood pressure during pregnancy plus additional health indicators like protein in the urine. Can lead to [HELLP Syndrome](#).
- [Eclampsia](#) – Severe complication of preeclampsia.

Click here for a resource to help guide your patients through questions to ask about high blood pressure during pregnancy.

## Blood Pressure Categories During Pregnancy

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)	and/or	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NON-HYPERTENSIVE	LESS THAN 140	and	LESS THAN 90
HYPERTENSION IN PREGNANCY*	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION* (If you don't have symptoms, call your health care professional immediately)	160 OR HIGHER	or	110 OR HIGHER

\* If you have any of these symptoms, call 911: severe headache, change in vision, abdominal pain, chest pain, significant swelling, or shortness of breath

[Click to enlarge the chart above.](#)

<sup>2</sup> American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines, 2025 AHA/ACC/AANP/AAPA/ABC/ACCP/ACPM/AGS/AMA/ASPC/NMA Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults.

<sup>3</sup> Go Red for Women, "Common Heart Conditions and Pregnancy," accessed September 18, 2025, <https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/know-your-risk/pregnancy-and-maternal-health/pregnancy-and-common-heart-conditions>.

## Self-Measured Blood Pressure (SMBP) Monitoring

Utilizing SMBP monitoring can be a key piece of managing high blood pressure during pregnancy and has been associated with decreased blood pressure, along with improved measures of cardiac structure and function at 6 and 9 months postpartum.<sup>4</sup>

Because this disorder can be brought on by pregnancy, it may be the first instance in which a patient has to monitor their blood pressure. Ensuring they understand and have the proper training to self-measure their blood pressure at home is essential.

For additional health care professional and patient resources around SMBP monitoring, [please click here](#).

**HOME BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT INSTRUCTIONS**

**Before You Measure**

- No smoking, caffeinated beverages, alcohol, or exercise 30 minutes prior
- Use a validated device with the correct cuff size (visit [Validate BP](#) to find a device you can trust)
- Empty your bladder
- Sit quietly for more than 5 minutes and do not talk

**Proper Positioning**

- Sit upright with back supported, feet on floor, and legs uncrossed
- Rest your arm comfortably on a flat surface at heart level
- Wrap the cuff on your bare skin above the bend of the elbow, not over clothing

**During Measurement**

- Stay relaxed and do not talk
- Take at least two readings, 1 minute apart
- Record all results once measurement is completed and share them with your health care professional to help confirm your office blood pressure category

**American Heart Association recommended office blood pressure categories**

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NON-HYPERTENSIVE	LESS THAN 140	and	LESS THAN 90
HYPERTENSION IN PREGNANCY*	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION* (If you don't have symptoms, call your health care professional immediately)	160 OR HIGHER	or	110 OR HIGHER

**BLOOD PRESSURE HIGHER THAN 160/130 MM HG**  
**MAY BE A HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY\***

\* Wait a few minutes and take blood pressure again  
\* If your blood pressure is still high and there are no other signs or symptoms, contact your health care professional  
\* If you are experiencing signs of possible organ damage, such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking, call 911

Learn more at [heart.org/BP](http://heart.org/BP)

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[Click to enlarge the image above.](#)

<sup>4</sup>American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Joint Committee, 2025 Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults.

# Gestational Diabetes

**Gestational diabetes** is the development of insulin resistance during pregnancy. It typically resolves postpartum, but its diagnosis increases the risk of Type 2 diabetes after pregnancy by 10-fold.<sup>5</sup>

! In November 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued their **first-ever global guidelines** for the management of diabetes during pregnancy.

English (PDF)

Spanish (PDF)

## At-Home Blood Glucose Monitoring

Some women may require insulin or other medications during pregnancy if their gestational diabetes cannot be controlled by diet alone.<sup>6</sup>

These women will need an accurate reading of their blood glucose readings to be able to track and adequately treat.

DATE	BREAKFAST		LUNCH		DINNER	
	Before Eating	After	Before Eating	After	Before Eating	After
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading

English (PDF)

Spanish (PDF)

<sup>5</sup> American Heart Association, "Six Pregnancy Complications."  
<sup>6</sup> Go Red for Women, "Pregnancy and Gestational Diabetes," accessed September 18, 2025, <https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/know-your-risk/pregnancy-and-maternal-health/pregnancy-and-common-heart-conditions/pregnancy-and-gestational-diabetes>.



# Resources

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## Hypertension of Pregnancy

- [At-Home Blood Pressure Measurement Instructions](#) (PDF)
- [Blood Pressure and Pregnancy](#) (Webpage)
- [Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy](#) (PDF)
- [Questions to Ask Your Health Care Professional About Blood Pressure While Pregnant](#) (PDF)

## Gestational Diabetes

- [At-Home Blood Glucose Log – English](#) (PDF)
- [At-Home Blood Glucose Log – Spanish](#) (PDF)
- [Gestational Diabetes Infographic – English](#) (PDF)
- [Gestational Diabetes Infographic - Spanish](#) (PDF)
- [Pregnancy and Gestational Diabetes](#) (Webpage)
- [What is Gestational Diabetes? – English](#) (PDF)
- [What is Gestational Diabetes? – Spanish](#) (PDF)
- [Why is Blood Sugar Important During Pregnancy? – English](#) (PDF)
- [Why is Blood Sugar Important During Pregnancy? – Spanish](#) (PDF)
- [WHO recommendations on care for women with diabetes during pregnancy](#) (Guideline)

## Maternal Health

- [Advancing Maternal Health Webinar Recording](#) (Video)
- [Advancing Postpartum Systems of Care Initiative](#) (Webpage)
- [Keeping Moms Healthy](#) (PDF)
- [Nutrition Tips for a Healthy Pregnancy](#) (PDF)
- [Opportunities in Postpartum Period to Reduce Cardiovascular Risk After Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes](#) (Article)
- [Pregnancy Checklist](#) (PDF)
- [Pregnancy and Maternal Health Resources and Tools](#) (Webpage)
- [Role of Cardiovascular Health in Maternal Health](#) (Webpage)



# Key Takeaways

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## **Maternal health matters.**

Conditions of pregnancy can have life-long implications.

## **There are several different types of high blood pressure during pregnancy.**

It is important health care professionals and patients alike understand the signs and symptoms of these conditions.

## **Self-Measured Blood Pressure (SMBP) during pregnancy can promote positive outcomes.**

Ensuring health care professionals and patients understand how to accurately capture blood pressure measurements at home is crucial.

## **At-Home Blood Glucose Monitoring helps mothers keep track of blood glucose levels and treat accordingly.**

Ensuring patients accurately capture blood glucose levels at home allows clinicians to adequately treat gestational diabetes.

## **Education is key.**

Ensure health care professionals and patients have resources available for continued learning.



# References

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American Heart Association, "Six Pregnancy Complications Are among Red Flags for Heart Disease Later in Life," accessed September 16, 2025, [https://newsroom.heart.org/news/six-pregnancy-complications-are-among-red-flags-for-heart-disease-later-in-life?preview=6d1b&preview\\_mode=True](https://newsroom.heart.org/news/six-pregnancy-complications-are-among-red-flags-for-heart-disease-later-in-life?preview=6d1b&preview_mode=True).

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