

Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy and Cardiovascular Disease

-- Question Prompt Tool with Answers for Clinicians --

My HDP diagnosis	Preventing heart disease
<p>1. How do I know if I had HDP? Symptoms are different in all pregnancies. Some include persistent headache, edema, sudden weight gain, vision changes, nausea, vomiting, pain in the upper right belly and making small amounts of urine. HDP may be diagnosed through blood pressure reading, urine tests, liver/kidney function tests and blood clotting tests. SEE Society of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists of Canada guideline No. 426 2022.</p>	<p>5. How can I prevent heart disease? You can reduce the risk of heart disease by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Not smoking- Keep physically active- Maintain a healthy weight- Follow a healthy diet- Get enough sleep- Reduce and manage stress- Get regular checks of blood pressure, cholesterol
<p>2. Why did I develop HDP? Possible risk factors of HDP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pre-existing hypertension or past HDP pregnancy- Kidney disease or diabetes- First pregnancy aged <20 or >40 years- Obesity- Pregnant with multiples- African/Caribbean non-Hispanic Black, Filipino or South Asian descent	<p>6. Who will monitor my heart health? How often? Family physicians, nurse practitioners or obstetric internists at regional centres can provide counseling and monitoring. Screening and treatment of risk factors (e.g. type 2 diabetes, chronic hypertension, chronic kidney disease, peripheral arterial disease, cardiovascular diseases or cerebrovascular diseases) should be based on each person's risk. Healthy lifestyle behaviours are considered first-line therapy.</p>
My risk of heart disease	Signs of heart disease
<p>3. Why does HDP increase risk of heart disease? The exact pathophysiology is unknown. Potential reasons include: (1) the effect of pregnancy as a "stress test" in women who are prone; (2) mediation by usual risk factors; (3) long-term vascular damage sustained during preeclamptic episode; and (4) pre-existing abnormalities in arterial health. SEE meta-analysis of risk of cardiovascular disease in different years post-partum after HDP</p>	<p>7. What are the signs of heart disease in women?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pain or discomfort in the chest, neck, jaw, throat, shoulder or arm- Sweating- Nausea- Shortness of breath- Light-headedness
<p>4. What is my risk of developing heart disease? HDP affects about 10% of all pregnancies, or about 37,000 Canadians yearly, leading to a 2- to 5-fold higher risk of premature cardiovascular disease (CVD) compared to normotensive pregnancies. CVD risk factors often appear within 5 years postpartum, and CVD events as early as 10 years post-delivery. Every person has a different risk, and the risk factors noted above (#5) will influence each person's risk.</p>	<p>8. If I have heart disease, what should I do? Practice preventive strategies (see #5). Cardiovascular disease can often be managed with medications. More serious cases may require medical procedures or surgery. Primary or secondary cardiac rehabilitation is also an option.</p>

