Blood Pressure Action Pack · Part 1 of 5

Red-Flag and Pregnancy Blood Pressure Card

Keep this card where you check your blood pressure.

EMERGENCY, WHATEVER THE READING

Call 999 for:

- sudden chest pain or tightness that doesn't go away
- severe difficulty breathing
- stroke signs: face drooping, arm weakness, slurred speech
- sudden blurred vision or loss of sight
- sudden severe headache or new confusion

VERY HIGH READING, FEELING WELL

Top number 180 or more, OR bottom number 120 or more:

- rest a few minutes, then check again
- still that high: contact your GP surgery as soon as possible
- worried, or can't reach your surgery: NHS 111

PREGNANT OR GAVE BIRTH IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS

- top number 160 or more, OR bottom number 110 or more: urgent help the same day, even if you feel well
- severe headache, blurred vision or flashing lights, pain below the ribs, or sudden swelling: urgent help
- pregnant: call your maternity unit straight away
- gave birth, or can't reach your maternity unit: call 111

ALSO IN PREGNANCY, AND MEDICINES

- over 20 weeks, and top number 140 or more, OR bottom number 90 or more, for the first time: maternity unit within 24 hours
- don't start, stop or change blood pressure medicine unless a doctor tells you to
- on blood pressure medicine and pregnant? Tell your doctor straight away

Full details in the description.

Full safety advice: turn over this sheet.

Pregnancy blood pressure numbers

During pregnancy and in the weeks after birth, a top number of 140 or higher, or a bottom number of 90 or higher, is high. [1, 2, 3]

A top number of 160 or higher, or a bottom number of 110 or higher, is severe. [2, 3]

What to do at each level is on the card above and in the full safety advice on the back.

Scan to get this pack

theeducatinggp.com/bp

Author: Dr Kennedy Umege, UK GP. MSc Diabetes (Distinction) · PgDip Diabetes · PITstop Diabetes Certification in Insulin management, DCH, DRCOG, MSc Urgent Care (Distinction) · Diploma in Urgent Medical Care, Certificate in Alcohol Misuse and Drug Abuse Management, MBBS · MRCGP · DFM. Version 1.0, 10 November 2026.

UK health education only. Not personal medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. In a life-threatening emergency call 999 or go to A&E. If you need medical help urgently, or are not sure where to go, use NHS 111 online or call 111. For other concerns contact your GP.
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The full safety advice

Call 999 straight away if you or someone else has sudden chest pain or tightness that does not go away, severe difficulty breathing, signs of a stroke such as face drooping, arm weakness or slurred speech, sudden blurred vision or loss of sight, a sudden severe headache, or new confusion. This applies whatever the blood pressure reading.

NICE counts blood pressure as severe when, measured in clinic, the top number is 180 or higher or the bottom number is 120 or higher. Either number on its own is enough. If either number in a home reading is at that level or higher and you feel well, rest for a few minutes and check it again. If either number is still that high, contact your GP surgery as soon as possible so it can be checked. If you're worried, or can't reach your surgery, get help from NHS 111.

If you often get headaches or blurred vision, or chest pain that comes and goes, get help from NHS 111.

If you're pregnant or have given birth in the last few weeks, different numbers apply. During pregnancy and in the weeks after birth, a top number of 140 or higher, or a bottom number of 90 or higher, is high. A top number of 160 or higher, or a bottom number of 110 or higher, is severe. If you're more than 20 weeks pregnant and either number reaches the high level for the first time in this pregnancy, contact your maternity unit so you can be checked within 24 hours, even if you feel well. If you're less than 20 weeks pregnant, or you had high blood pressure before this pregnancy, tell your midwife about a high reading, because you may need to see a specialist. If you've given birth in the last few weeks and either number reaches the high level, tell your midwife, health visitor or GP so it can be checked. If either number reaches the severe level, get urgent medical help the same day, even if you feel well. Also get urgent medical help if you have symptoms such as a severe headache that does not go away with painkillers, blurred vision or flashing lights, pain below the ribs, sudden swelling of the face, hands or feet, or feeling very unwell. If you're pregnant, call your maternity unit straight away. If you've recently given birth or can't reach your maternity unit, call 111.

Do not start, stop or change blood pressure medicine unless a doctor tells you to. If you take blood pressure medicine and find out you're pregnant, tell your doctor straight away.

The card and the safety advice above are approved wording, printed unchanged. Evidence: NICE NG136 (Terms used and 1.5.1; last updated 26 February 2026); NICE NG201 (1.2.26 and 1.2.27; published 19 August 2021); NICE NG133 (Terms used; last updated 17 April 2023); NHS.uk pages on high blood pressure (reviewed 19 July 2024), stroke symptoms (reviewed 12 September 2024), heart attack (reviewed 31 March 2026), chest pain (reviewed 8 August 2023), shortness of breath (reviewed 30 January 2024), confusion (reviewed 28 May 2024), subarachnoid haemorrhage (reviewed 4 September 2025), pre-eclampsia (reviewed 23 March 2026), high blood pressure in pregnancy (reviewed 13 November 2024) and amlodipine (reviewed 9 June 2026).

Sources (checked 10 November 2026)

[1] NICE NG133, Hypertension in pregnancy: diagnosis and management (last updated 17 April 2023), Terms used in this guideline: hypertension. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng133/chapter/Recommendations
[2] NICE NG201, Antenatal care (published 19 August 2021), recommendations 1.2.26 and 1.2.27. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng201/chapter/Recommendations
[3] NHS.uk, High blood pressure (hypertension) and pregnancy (page last reviewed 13 November 2024). https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/existing-health-conditions/high-blood-pressure/

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