

Pre-eclampsia

Things You Should Know About Pre-Eclampsia

What Is It?

An illness which occurs only in pregnancy and can affect both a mother and her unborn baby. Most cases are mild, but there is a severe form which can be dangerous. Among the most serious complications are convulsions known as 'eclampsia' – hence the term pre-eclampsia.

Who Gets It?

About one pregnant woman in every 10. Most at risk women are first-time mothers; the over 40s; those with a BMI over 35; women with a family history of preeclampsia: where it is ten years or more since a last baby; those suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease; those carrying more than one baby and those who have had it before.

What Causes It?

A problem in the placenta which restricts the flow of blood to the baby. This problem develops in early pregnancy but doesn't cause illness until much later – usually the last few weeks.

What Are The Signs?

High blood pressure, protein in the urine in the mother, and sometimes, poor growth in the baby – all of which should be detected by routine ante-natal checks.

How Is It Treated?

Women with pre-eclampsia are monitored carefully – usually hospital or a day ward – and may be given drugs to control blood pressure.

This leaflet can be made available in difference formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk