

CIRCULAR

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HYPERTENSION IN PREGNANCY

Hypertension in pregnancy is common, affecting about 7 per cent of all mothers. It is a significant cause of maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality.

The health risks for both mother and baby are reduced by regular screening for hypertension during pregnancy, followed by appropriate management, including referral where necessary.

The definition of hypertension in pregnancy is ¹:

1. Systolic BP \geq 140 mm Hg and/or diastolic BP \geq 90 mm Hg
Or
2. Rise in the systolic BP \geq 25 mm Hg and/or diastolic BP \geq 15 mm Hg from pre-conception or first trimester blood pressure.

Elevated blood pressure should be confirmed by two readings six hours apart.

As complications of hypertension may develop rapidly in pregnancy, any mother who has a blood pressure meeting these criteria at any time during pregnancy should be referred immediately to a specialist obstetrician for review.

1. Australasian Society for the study of Hypertension in Pregnancy. Management of Hypertension in Pregnancy: Consensus Statement.

Michael Reid
Director-General

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