



# Health Pregnancy Essentials

What to watch for and  
when to reach out

# Webinar tips



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# Today's G.E.H.A presenters



**Angela K. | BS**  
Sales, National Webinar Engagement Specialist  
G.E.H.A



**Amanda C. | BSN, RNC-OB**  
Clinical Operations, Maternity Nurse Case Manager  
G.E.H.A



**Kelsey C. | BSN, RN, CCM**  
Clinical Operations, Maternity Nurse Case Manager  
G.E.H.A

# Agenda



- State of maternal health
- Pregnancy-related conditions
- What to watch for during pregnancy
- When and how to get help



# State of maternal health

## Maternal health disparities

### Black Maternal Health Week

- April 11–17, 2026
- [blkmaternalhealthweek.com](https://blkmaternalhealthweek.com)

### Leading pregnancy conditions:

- Mental health conditions
- Heart conditions
- Severe bleeding
- Infections

Sources: [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#), [American Medical Association](#), [Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology](#), [Black Maternal Health Week](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

# Pregnancy-related conditions



# Hypertension in pregnancy

## Chronic hypertension (CHTN)

- Present **before pregnancy** or **before 20 weeks**
- Higher risk for fetal growth restriction & preeclampsia

## Gestational hypertension (GHTN)

- New high blood pressure **after** 20 weeks
- Can progress to preeclampsia

## What you can do

- Follow your obstetrician's guidance on symptoms, home blood pressure checks, medication and fetal movement awareness





# Preeclampsia

## What is preeclampsia?

- Preeclampsia is a condition that can develop after 20 weeks of pregnancy when high blood pressure is present with signs that other organs are being affected

## Why it matters

- Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy are also a major cause of maternal and newborn complications

## What to watch for

- Severe headache
- Vision changes
- Right-side upper abdominal pain
- Sudden swelling
- Shortness of breath

## When to reach out

- If you experience any of these symptoms or notice higher blood pressure readings at home, reach out to your obstetrician or health care team right away

Sources: [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [“High Blood Pressure During Pregnancy”](#), [“Working Together to Reduce Black Maternal Mortality”](#)

# Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM)

## What is GDM?

- A form of diabetes that is diagnosed during pregnancy

## What leads to the development of GDM?

- Pregnancy hormones can interfere with insulin, causing blood sugar levels to rise

## What are the potential consequences of uncontrolled blood sugar levels?

- It can increase health risks for both the mother and baby during pregnancy and delivery

## What are the key steps to take if you have been diagnosed with GDM?

- Manage blood sugar through monitoring, nutrition, activity and medication (if needed)



Sources: [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



# Perinatal/postpartum depression (PPD)

## What is PPD?

- A mood disorder that occurs during pregnancy or after delivery of infant

## Key signs and symptoms to recognize

- Ongoing sadness or anxiety, irritability, low energy, sleep or appetite changes, trouble bonding with your baby, or thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

## Suspecting I have PPD, what are the next steps?

- Contact your OB-GYN or primary care provider right away for evaluation

## Available treatment options

- Treatment may include therapy and/or medication

## Support and resources

- Help is available through Postpartum Support International, the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

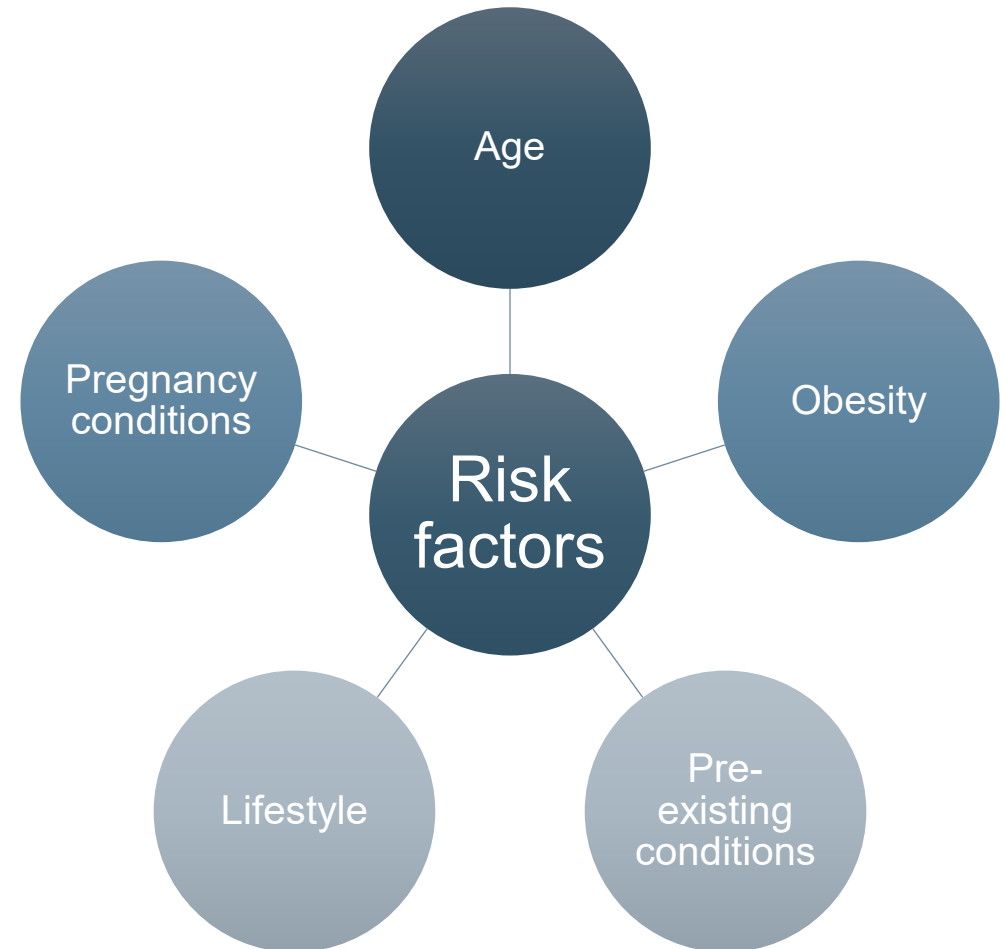
Sources: [National Institute of Mental Health](#), [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#), [Office on Women's Health](#), [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#)

# What to watch for during pregnancy



## Risk factors to consider

- **Age:** Under 16 or first pregnancy over 35
- **Obesity**
- **Pre-existing conditions:** Diabetes, thyroid disease and high blood pressure
- **Lifestyle:** Alcohol use, smoking and drug use
- **Pregnancy conditions:** Multiple gestation, prior preterm birth or pregnancy loss



Source: [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development](#)

# Urgent maternal warning signs



# Urgent maternal/postpartum warning signs

- Chest pain
- Headache
- Swelling in hands and face
- Dizziness
- Severe abdominal pain
- Blurred vision
- Heavy vaginal bleeding
- Difficulty breathing



Sources: [Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [“Urgent Maternal Warning Signs and Symptoms,”](#) [“Pregnant now or within the last year?”](#) [“You know your body best”](#)



# Pre-term labor

## What is pre-term labor?

- Pre-term labor is labor that starts prior to 37 weeks gestation

## Indicators and symptoms of pre-term labor

- Frequent contractions, vaginal bleeding or fluid leakage, pelvic pressure, cramping or a dull backache

## Factors that increase risk

- Prior pre-term birth, having more than one baby (twins, triplets, etc.), certain health conditions or infections, short spacing between pregnancies and lifestyle factors

## Available treatment options

- May include care at a hospital specializing in premature birth

Sources: [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development](#), [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#)

# When & how to get help



# CDC HEAR HER campaign

## Use this guide to help start the conversation:

- Thank you for seeing me. I am/was recently pregnant. The date of my last period/delivery was \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm having serious concerns about my health that I'd like to talk to you about.
- I have been having \_\_\_\_\_ (symptoms) that feel like \_\_\_\_\_ (describe in detail) and have been lasting \_\_\_\_\_ (number of hours/days).
- I know my body and this doesn't feel normal.

## Sample questions to ask:

- What could these symptoms mean?
- Is there a test I can have to rule out a serious problem?
- At what point should I consider going to the emergency room or calling 911?

## Start the conversation

- Listen to and trust your body
- Use a notebook to keep track of symptoms and questions for prenatal visits
- If it is helpful, use the CDC's guide to help start the conversation

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "[Urgent Maternal Warning Signs and Symptoms](#)," "[Pregnant now or within the last year?](#)" "[You know your body best](#)"



# National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

## National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

- Phone/Text: 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)
- Availability: 24/7, free, and confidential
- Provides emotional support, resources and referrals for pregnant and postpartum individuals

## Why it's important

- Maternal mental health challenges are common and treatable
- Having someone to talk to can make a big difference in reducing stress and anxiety

## Learn more & share

- [National Maternal Mental Health website](#)

Source: [Health Resources and Services Administration](#)

## Wrap-up

- State of maternal health
- Pregnancy-related conditions
- What to watch for during pregnancy
- Urgent maternal warning signs
- When & how to get help



# Questions?



# G.E.H.A member resources



## Elevate and Elevate Plus plans

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- Learn more at [geha.com/WellnessPays](https://geha.com/WellnessPays)



## High, Standard and HDHP plans

- G.E.H.A Well-being Platform
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## All G.E.H.A plans

- Healthy recipes and health and wellness articles
- Learn more at [geha.com/Blog](https://geha.com/Blog)



G.E.H.A website for benefit information [geha.com](https://geha.com)



## More questions?



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