

Help prevent pre-eclampsia with prenatal aspirin

Background: Pre-eclampsia is one of four types of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. It is defined as the development of hypertension with either proteinuria or end-organ dysfunction with onset occurring after 20 weeks of gestation in a previously normotensive woman.

Pre-eclampsia facts:

- The exact incidence of pre-eclampsia is unknown.
- Pre-eclampsia is reported to affect 5-10 percent of pregnancies with rates in the United States increasing. (*ACOG Comm Op #638, September 2015, Reaffirmed, 2017*)
- Pre-eclampsia is one of the leading causes of maternal morbidity and mortality, accounting for 15.9 percent of the approximately 700 pregnancy-related deaths per year in the United States. (*U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, 2014*)
- Non-Hispanic Black women experience mortality rates 3-4 times that of non-Hispanic White women. (*CDC Advancing the Health of Mothers in the 21st Century At A Glance, 2016*)

Although the definitive etiology remains unknown, it is thought to involve ischemic placental disease. After decades of research, daily low-dose aspirin has emerged as an effective prevention. Its anti-inflammatory and anti-platelet properties are key to counteracting the changes in platelet and vessel wall function that result in pre-eclampsia. Safety and efficacy of the use of aspirin in pregnancy has also been confirmed in the literature and supported by the [U.S. Preventive Services Task Force](#) in 2014.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently recommended the use of daily aspirin in pregnant women with certain risk factors. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine have endorsed the recommendation of a daily 81 mg aspirin for women at high risk of developing pre-eclampsia starting at 12-28 weeks of pregnancy. (*ACOG Comm Op #743, July 2018*)

Other potentially effective interventions are close surveillance of blood pressure through in-office and at-home monitoring and decreasing stress.

Dell Children's Health Plan recognizes the opportunity to collaborate with our obstetrical care providers to improve women's health and pregnancy outcomes. We hope all obstetrical care providers will join us in promoting early identification of women with at-risk pregnancies, close surveillance of blood pressure, reduction of stress, and administration of prenatal aspirin in eligible women.

Tips for providers:

- Prescription prenatal aspirin and home blood pressure monitors are covered benefits for our members.
- Prescriptions for aspirin help our members avoid out-of-pocket costs.
- Prescriptions for automatic, digital, home-use blood pressure monitors (with appropriately sized cuffs) and proper instruction encourage members to identify pre-eclampsia early.

- Education on normal blood pressure during pregnancy empowers members to partner with you in their prenatal care.

What if I need assistance?

If you have any questions about this information or our obstetrical case management program, please contact your Provider Relations representative or Provider Services at 1-888-821-1108.