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# Thinking of having a baby?: High Blood Pressure and Pregnancy

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City and Hackney  
Clinical Commissioning Group



## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE:

### HOW TO OPTIMISE YOUR HEALTH BEFORE PREGNANCY

The majority of women with high blood pressure have healthy babies, but this leaflet is to highlight how we can improve the outcomes for both you and your baby.

If you have high blood pressure, it is important that your blood pressure is well controlled and your medicines reviewed before you get pregnant to help to reduce the risks of complications for yourself and your baby. There are certain things that can be done before you become pregnant to help.

#### Here is a brief overview of the risks:

With high blood pressure, there is a higher chance of the following conditions or complications arising during pregnancy:

- Pre-eclampsia

This is a pregnancy complication characterised by high blood pressure and signs of damage to other organs, often the kidneys.

Symptoms include severe headache, visual disturbance, severe pain just below the ribs, vomiting and sudden swelling of face, hands or feet

- Very high blood pressure in the third trimester
- Small (underweight) baby
- Problems with the placenta
- Premature Baby
- Stillbirth

## Local Voluntary Services

Service	Description	Contact Details
Anna Freud Centre	Collection of services for families. Social Care.	0207 794 2313
Bikur Cholem	Orthodox Jewish MH Support Network/Services	020 8800 7575
Bump Buddies	Shoreditch Trust based support network	<a href="http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/bump-buddies/">http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/bump-buddies/</a>
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services	GP Referral
Children's Centre	Children's day care and activity centres.	<a href="https://www.learningtrust.co.uk/ChildcarePlay/Pages/Children'sCentresandNurses.aspx">https://www.learningtrust.co.uk/ChildcarePlay/Pages/Children'sCentresandNurses.aspx</a>
CMHT Adult Mental Health	Community Mental Health	GP Referral
CYPS	Children and Young People's Service	GP Referral
Derman	Turkish/Kurdish support service	020 7613 5944
Ezer Leylolds	Orthodox Jewish family support group	020 8800 2488
First Steps	CAMHS Service	020 7683 4611
Hackney Wellbeing	Centre for Better Health	020 8985 3570
Mind	Mental Health Charity	020 8985 4239
Netmums	Online Support Network/Services	<a href="https://www.netmums.com/hackney">https://www.netmums.com/hackney</a>
Off Centre	Young People's MH Service Hackney	020 8986 4016
Orbit	Drug and Alcohol Support for Mothers	020 7749 9850

### Support and advice:

However, as has been discussed there are many local voluntary services to contact in order to get help with weight loss and other dietary and exercise based queries. Please see the Hackney iCARE database for local classes in your area, as well as the organisations in the table overleaf for any further advice.

<https://www.hackneyicare.org.uk/kb5/hackney/asch/home.page>



### Blood pressure medicines

While it is important to keep taking your blood pressure tablets before and during your pregnancy, some blood pressure tablets are not safe to take during pregnancy so it is important to see your doctor before you become pregnant. Alternative medications are available. Always consult your doctor before stopping any medications.

If you are taking blood pressure medicines called ACE inhibitors (such as Ramipril), angiotensin II receptor blockers (such as Losartan), or chlorothiazides (such as Bendroflumethiazide), these should be stopped before pregnancy as they are not safe to take during pregnancy, and an alternative should be started by your doctor

### Reducing your risks

The following can help to reduce the risks before becoming pregnant:

- Aim for a blood pressure less than 150/100 if you have uncomplicated high blood pressure
- If you have any complications from high blood pressure, such as eye or kidney damage, your blood pressure should be less than 140/90
- Instead of the above blood pressure medications that are not recommended during pregnancy, your doctor may wish to switch you onto a medicine called Labetolol, or if this is not tolerated for any reason, Methyldopa or Nifedipine
- You may also need to take a mini aspirin 75mg from 12 weeks onwards which can help reduce your risks of complications
- You should stick to a low salt diet to help control your blood pressure

Your GP can refer your high blood pressure to a preconception clinic (if needed) to help to optimise blood pressure before becoming pregnant.