



Hypertension During Pregnancy in Florida, 2001-2002

Although many pregnant women with hypertension (high blood pressure) have healthy babies without serious problems, hypertension during pregnancy can cause severe health complications, such as renal failure, preeclampsia, and eclampsia. Hypertensive disorders are a leading cause of maternal and infant illness and death.

According to Florida PRAMS 2001 and 2002 survey data, compared to women without hypertension during pregnancy, women with hypertension during pregnancy have a higher prevalence of severe nausea, vomiting, or dehydration during pregnancy (39.9 percent versus 27.8 percent), placental problems (9.3 percent versus 5.4 percent), premature rupture of membranes (8.3 percent versus 4.5 percent), vaginal bleeding during pregnancy (22.1 percent versus 14.4 percent), preterm labor (39.9 percent versus 26.8 percent), preterm birth (18.2 percent versus 7.8 percent), low birth weight (12.5 percent versus 6.3 percent), very low birth weight (2.5 percent versus 1.1 percent), and infants requiring neonatal intensive care (16.3 percent versus 12.3 percent). The data show that 18.7 percent of women in Florida had hypertension during their most recent pregnancy. The prevalence of having hypertension among pregnant women in Florida was:

- Higher among both non-Hispanic White women (21.4 percent) and non-Hispanic Black women (19.9 percent) than among Hispanic women (12.9 percent).
- Higher among women ages 19 and younger (21.3 percent) and among women ages 25 to 34 (19.0 percent) than among those ages 35 and older (14.1 percent), 19.5 percent among women ages 20 to 24.
- Almost identical among all levels of education. In particular, 18.9 percent among women with less than a high school education, 18.5 percent among women with a high school education, and 18.5 percent among those with more than a high school education.
- Similar among all levels of household income. In particular, 18.9 percent among women with incomes of \$15,600 or less, 19.8 percent among women with incomes between \$15,601 and \$39,600, and 16.1 percent among those with incomes over \$39,600.
- Although apparently higher among unmarried women (20.2 percent) than among married women (17.8 percent), the difference between these rates was found to be statistically insignificant.
- Higher among women with unintended pregnancies (21.2 percent) than among those with intended pregnancies (16.6 percent).
- Almost identical among Medicaid recipients (18.9 percent) and non-Medicaid recipients (18.6 percent).
- Higher among women who had diabetes either before pregnancy (39.9 percent) or during pregnancy (37.9 percent) than among those who did not (18.1 percent and 16.9 percent, respectively).
- More than five times higher among women who had hypertension before pregnancy (85.7 percent) than among those who did not have hypertension before pregnancy (15.3 percent).
- Higher among women who were either overweight (22.6 percent) or obese (31.5 percent) before pregnancy than among those with either underweight (12.5 percent) or normal weight (15.1 percent) before pregnancy.
- Higher among women pregnant with twins or higher number multiples (37.1 percent) than among those pregnant with one baby (18.3 percent).
- Higher among first-time mothers (23.9 percent) than among those with previous live births (15.0 percent).
- Higher among women who smoked cigarettes during the three months before pregnancy (24.6 percent) than among those who did not smoke before pregnancy (17.4 percent).
- Higher among women who were victims of physical abuse either before pregnancy (27.9 percent) or during pregnancy (28.6 percent) than among women who were not (18.1 percent and 18.1 percent, respectively).
- Higher among women who were involved in a physical fight during the 12-month, pre-birth period (32.3 percent) than among those who were not (17.9 percent).
- Higher among women who had a lot of bills they could not pay during the 12-month, pre-birth period (23.1 percent) than among those who did not (17.0 percent).
- Higher among women whose husband or partner became unemployed during the 12-month, pre-birth period (23.8 percent) than among those who did not (17.9 percent).

This study shows that women who are more likely to have hypertension during pregnancy are non-Hispanic Whites, non-Hispanic Blacks, ages 34 and younger, have unintended pregnancies, have diabetes, have hypertension before pregnancy, are overweight or obese, are pregnant with pregnant with twins or higher number multiples, are first-time mothers, smoke cigarettes, are victims of physical abuse, and/or experience financial stress. The data underscore the adverse health impact of hypertension during pregnancy on infants. These findings may assist healthcare providers in providing effective information for decreasing the prevalence of hypertension among pregnant women in Florida.

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For more information about Florida PRAMS, please contact Helen Marshall, PRAMS Coordinator, at (850) 245-4444, extension 2415, or by e-mail at: Helen_Marshall@doh.state.fl.us; or Curt Miller, Epidemiologist, extension 2407, or by e-mail at: Curt_Miller@doh.state.fl.us; or visit the department's web site at: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/prams/prams.htm.