

Prenatal Care for High-Risk Pregnancies



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What is a high-risk pregnancy?

A high-risk pregnancy is defined as one in which the woman, fetus, or infant is at risk of death or residual injury and that requires additional resources, procedures, or specialized care to optimize outcomes.



What causes high-risk pregnancies?

Several factors could increase the risk of experiencing health complications during and after pregnancy:

- Age
- Lifestyle choices (smoking, alcohol consumption, drug use, etc.)
- Pre-existing health conditions (obesity, diabetes, hypertension, etc.)
- Prior history with pregnancy complications (preterm birth, low birth weight, etc.)
- Multiple births (pregnant with twins, triplets, etc.)
- Socioeconomic factors (education status, access to healthcare, etc.)
- Geographic factors

Maternal warning signs

Signs and symptoms may include the following, but this is not a comprehensive list. Please contact your medical provider if you have any concerns regarding your pregnancy.

Abdominal pain	Trouble breathing
Dizziness	Vaginal bleeding
Fainting	Fatigue
Heart palpitations	Thoughts of self-harm

For more information and resources, visit safebirth.org.

Fast Facts

- As of 2024, 6-8% of pregnant women in the United States have high-risk pregnancies per year (that's roughly 30,000 to 50,000 people)
- Other potential high-risk pregnancy complications can include unusual placenta location, low fetal growth, and Rh sensitization
- The CDC has provided an infographic that describes the various signs and symptoms of urgent maternal warning signs. Scan the QR code below to access it.



Potential complications of high-risk pregnancies

This is not a comprehensive list. Additional complications may apply based on your medical history, assessment, and diagnostic screenings.

Pre-term birth	NICU/ICU admission
C-section	Birth defects
Low birth weight	Preeclampsia, eclampsia, hypertension
Miscarriage	Postpartum hemorrhage



Questions to ask your doctor about your pregnancy

Remember to disclose your pregnancy history, any health conditions you have, any medications you take, and your lifestyle factors (smoking, substance use, or consumption of alcohol)

1. What type of doctors will I need to see while I'm pregnant and postpartum?
2. Will I need to schedule more appointments during the pregnancy and postpartum period?
3. What tests will I have to undergo while I am high-risk?
4. How will my birth plan look different if I have a high-risk pregnancy?
5. What should I avoid during my pregnancy due to my high-risk status?
6. Are there any networks or resources that are useful for those with high-risk pregnancies?

Resources

Hoosier Healthwise: [Link](#)

Moms Helpline: [Link](#)

PSI Support Groups: [Link](#)

My Healthy Baby: [Link](#)

MCH Resource Guide: (Coming Soon)

Centering Sites in Indiana: [Link](#)

If You're Experiencing an Emergency:

Call 911 or travel to the nearest emergency room

Postpartum Support International (PSI)

800-944-4773 (Call)

503-894-9453 (Text)