

BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT ON A PREGNANT WOMAN GUIDELINE

1. OPTIMAL OUTCOMES

- To accurately and consistently measure and record a blood pressure

2. PATIENT

- Pregnant women requiring assessment

3. STAFF

- Midwifery staff
- Medical staff

4. EQUIPMENT

- Sphygmomanometer
- Stethoscope
- Mercury spill kit

5. CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Position the woman, seated, with feet supported, or semi-recumbent if in bed; for 2-3 minutes
- Measure blood pressure on right arm
- Use the appropriate sized cuff; regular cuff if arm diameter is ≤ 33 cm; large cuff if > 33 cm
- Inflate cuff 20 mmHg above systolic pressure when felt at the brachial artery
- Deflate cuff slowly, 2mmHg per second
- Record systolic & diastolic blood pressure
- Record diastolic blood pressure at the phase V Korotkoff sound (when sounds disappear)
- Repeat reading and consult medical officer if an abnormal reading occurs
- Refer to management plan or consult medical officer if an abnormal reading occurs for an inpatient woman

6. HAZARDS/SUB-OPTIMAL OUTCOMES

- Blood pressure is measured inaccurately

7. DOCUMENTATION

- Outpatient care: antenatal notes and antenatal card
- Inpatients: Observation sheet & integrated notes if reading abnormal

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ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN

Approved by
RHW Quality Council
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CLINICAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES**BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT ON A PREGNANT WOMAN GUIDELINE cont'd****8. EDUCATIONAL NOTES**

- A mercury sphygmomanometer is the gold standard for measuring blood pressure in pregnancy and should always be used if gestational hypertension or pre-eclampsia is suspected
- Hypertension in pregnancy is diagnosed when.
 - Systolic blood pressure is ≥ 140 mmHg
 - And/or
 - Diastolic blood pressure (Korotkoff V) is ≥ 90 mmHg
- Blood pressure should be taken using both arms initially, then on the right arm if there is little difference between arms, if there is a significant difference, refer to the consultant physician

9. RELATED POLICIES/ PROCEDURES

- Administration of IV Hydralazine to Antenatal patients
- Intrapartum care for women with preeclampsia
- Management of preeclampsia
- Eclampsia Prophylaxis with Magnesium Sulphate

10. REFERENCES

- Council of Australasian Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy. (2000) Consensus Statement, the detection, investigation and management of hypertension in Pregnancy
- O'Brien E et al., (2003). European Society of Hypertension recommendations for conventional, ambulatory and home Blood Pressure measurement. Journal of Hypertension, 21(5): 821-848