

# Headaches during pregnancy and the immediate postnatal period

Is the woman Antenatal or Postnatal?

Antenatal

Postnatal <6 weeks

<20 weeks

>20 weeks

History of spinal analgesia with symptoms of a post dural headache? \*

Attend GP

Risk factors/symptoms of PET identified? \*

Yes

No

No

**Attend triage for review**

Review VTE risk. If no sepsis or VTE red flags identified-encourage rest/hydration/analgesia.

Women should be seen in primary care for:

Women who report thunderclap headaches should be referred to A&E and may require neurology review

Refer to GP if headaches ongoing.

Migraines or cluster headaches

Tension type headaches

Medication overuse headaches

**Symptoms of post dural headache**  
Bilateral frontal or occipital headaches that are worse when the patient is in the upright position and will improve when the patient is supine. Any movements that increase intracranial pressure (such as coughing, sneezing and straining) may exacerbate symptoms

**Symptoms of pre-eclampsia**

- Hypertension
- Headache
- Proteinuria
- Epigastric pain
- Oedema
- Visual disturbances
- Vomiting

**Risk factors for pre-eclampsia (NICE)**

**Moderate**

- First pregnancy
- Age 40 or over
- Pregnancy interval of 10 years or more
- BMI of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more at first visit
- Family history of pre-eclampsia
- Multi-fetal pregnancy

**High**

- Hypertensive disease during previous pregnancy
- Chronic kidney disease
- Autoimmune disease such as systemic lupus erythematosus or antiphospholipid syndrome
- Type 1 or type 2 diabetes
- Chronic hypertension