

# Preeclampsia: Impacting Mothers, Infants and Families

## Strategies for Improving Pregnancy Outcomes

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### Presentation Objectives

- Review basic information about preeclampsia, a leading cause of maternal death and illness, premature births and neonatal death.
- Utilize proven methods and tools for supporting prenatal and postpartum patient education regarding preeclampsia signs & symptoms, to reduce patient factors contributing to preventable maternal and neonatal deaths.
- Gain appreciation and resources for addressing mental health impact of severe maternal events.

### Highlights

#### Preeclampsia

- Preeclampsia, a serious hypertensive disorder of pregnancy, is one of the leading causes of mothers (and babies) dying or getting very ill in pregnancy and most of the cases of death have been found to be preventable.

#### Preventable Patient Factors

- Patient factors – such as delays in seeking care and failing to recognize the severity of symptoms – contribute to as many as half of these deaths in some areas of the country. Patient education about preeclampsia and its warning signs has not been routinely provided during prenatal care and almost non-existent in the postpartum period and yet is one of the most low-cost, low-tech interventions that can contribute to improved outcomes. Low-cost, evidence-based, low literacy patient education materials are available from the Preeclampsia Foundation (see Resources below).

#### Mental Health Effects

- Mothers (and their family members) can be emotionally traumatized by the unexpected and life-threatening effects of preeclampsia. Mental health assessment & support is suggested.

#### Resources

- Main EK, McCain CL, Morton CH, et al. Pregnancy-Related Mortality in California Causes, Characteristics, and Improvement Opportunities. *Obstet Gynecol* 2015;125:938-47.
- You WB, Wolf MS, Bailey SC, et al. Improving patient understanding of preeclampsia: a randomized controlled trial. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2012;206:e1-5.
- Patient education materials (tear pads, posters, brochures, videos) are available: [www.preeclampsia.org/store](http://www.preeclampsia.org/store)