



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Global Partners Focus Attention on the Importance of Blood Pressure on World Preeclampsia Day**

*May 20, 2020 - Melbourne, FL* - Nearly 76,000 mothers and 500,000 babies worldwide lose their lives to preeclampsia and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy every year. To raise awareness about this life-threatening complication of pregnancy, several global maternal health organizations have joined forces for the fourth annual World Preeclampsia Day Friday, May 22, and invite others to join the call to action.

This year, as COVID-19 has impacted access to prenatal and postnatal care and telehealth is being widely used, the need for personal awareness of blood pressure, the hallmark signal for preeclampsia, is needed now more than ever.

“Our goal is to educate and empower mothers to know the signs and symptoms and to the extent possible to check their blood pressure at home,” says Eleni Tsigas, Chief Executive Officer of the Preeclampsia Foundation.

World Preeclampsia Day’s message is *Check, Know, Share*, a campaign to teach women how to take their blood pressure, understand their numbers, and talk to their healthcare provider about treatment. Pregnant and postpartum mothers are encouraged to download a blood pressure log, take twice daily readings, recognize what are abnormal readings and when to seek medical attention, and view a video tutorial on accurate blood pressure measurement at [www.preeclampsia.org/blood-pressure](http://www.preeclampsia.org/blood-pressure). Patient information about preeclampsia is now available in dozens of languages at [www.preeclampsia.org](http://www.preeclampsia.org).

This message has been strengthened by the support of the International Society of the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy (ISSHP); the World Hypertension League; the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO); Million Hearts® 2022; and World Organization Gestosis.

“By teaching women to measure and track their blood pressure, they become active partners in their healthcare,” says Professor Laura Magee, President of the ISSHP and a practicing clinician and advocate for patient engagement.

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Preeclampsia can strike without warning, usually after the 20th week of pregnancy and up to six weeks after birth. It is not rare, and together with related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, affects 10 percent of all pregnant women worldwide, and is the leading cause of medically indicated preterm births.

Preeclampsia is a multi-system syndrome, marked by elevated blood pressure and usually, but not always, protein in the urine. Women should contact their healthcare providers immediately if any of these symptoms occur:

- Severe headache that will not go away even with medication
- Changes in vision (spots, light flashes, or vision loss)
- Difficulty breathing, gasping, or panting
- Upper right belly pain often mistaken for indigestion or the flu
- Swelling of the face and hands
- Weight gain of more than five pounds (2,3 kg) in one week
- Nausea after mid-pregnancy

#### **About the Preeclampsia Foundation**

Preeclampsia Foundation is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2000 to improve the outcomes of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy by educating, supporting, and engaging the community, improving healthcare practices, and finding a cure. We envision a world where preeclampsia and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy no longer threaten the lives of mothers and babies. Visit [www.preeclampsia.org](http://www.preeclampsia.org).

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