Preeclampsia
Signs & Symptoms

- high blood pressure
- high protein levels in your urine
- changes in vision; blurred vision; seeing spots
- severe headaches
- increased swelling in ankles, hands and feet
- weight gain of more than 5 pounds in one week
- breathing, gasping or panting
- nausea after mid pregnancy

Know what you can do

- attend all prenatal appointments
- monitor your blood pressure and weight regularly — contact your healthcare provider immediately if either becomes unexpectedly high
- talk your healthcare provider about your risk for preeclampsia and how you can reduce your risk
- eat right, exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight
- know your family health history, especially for pregnancy, high blood pressure and heart disease
- know the symptoms, trust yourself, advocate to be heard

As if having preeclampsia with one pregnancy wasn’t enough, Lisa experienced preeclampsia twice.

Being an ob nurse, she was fortunate to know the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia and to get help. Lisa also knew that preeclampsia is not rare and is life-threatening. But when it happened to her it was no less a surprise. The experience and the ensuing challenges were unexpected and overwhelming.

Preeclampsia in her first pregnancy resulted in premature delivery of her daughter, and robbed her of the joy of her anticipated normal, healthy pregnancy.

And then preeclampsia struck hard with the second pregnancy, creating life-threatening complications. And because she was being monitored closely given her preeclampsia history, she knew what to do when, again at 36 weeks, and without warning, her blood pressure spiked. Her son was delivered that day - the doctor was not taking any chances.

What happened next was totally unexpected as she was always told “delivery is the cure for preeclampsia.” She developed a severe headache and was diagnosed with PRES Syndrome — leaking of fluid in the brain that is caused by the severe hypertension of preeclampsia. It was followed by a grand mal seizure and led to a 9 day hospital stay.

And the aftermath continued for nearly 7 months with both emotional and physical challenges that were also unexpected and for which she was unprepared.

She shares her story with women now because she believes that sometimes even the most educated among us can be unprepared to deal with an unexpected and seemingly out of control medical situation. Lisa wants all women to know the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia so that they can have the conversation with their healthcare provider and be monitored during and after pregnancy.

Visit www.preeclampsia.org for more information about the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia and how to reduce your risk.