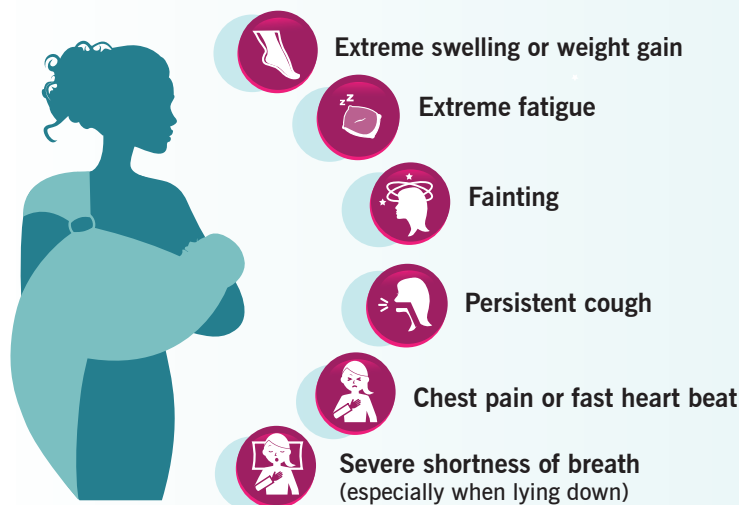


# Signs & Symptoms of Heart Disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in the U.S. who are pregnant or gave birth in the last 5 months (postpartum).

*During Pregnancy and Postpartum*

**Symptoms** to watch for in late pregnancy and up to five months postpartum:



**NOTE:** While some of these symptoms are common in late pregnancy, they may be a sign of heart disease especially if they are severe and do not go away after treatment.



If you have any of these symptoms and they don't go away:

- ♥ Contact your OB, midwife, family medicine doctor, or your primary care provider
- ♥ Describe your symptoms clearly and explain how sick you feel
- ♥ If your symptoms arise postpartum, be sure to tell the provider that you recently had a baby
- ♥ If your provider says your symptoms are normal, ask what symptoms should cause you to call or come back



**Go to the Emergency Department**

If you have persistent chest pain or severe shortness of breath, or otherwise feel extremely sick. If possible, take someone with you.

**Any woman** can develop heart disease in pregnancy or postpartum, but you are at **higher risk** if you:

♥  
Have prior heart disease

♥  
Are over 40 years old

♥  
Have preeclampsia or high blood pressure (hypertension)

♥  
Are African-American (4X greater risk and 8-10X more likely to die of heart disease)

♥  
Are obese



**Bottom line**

- \* Trust your instincts when you feel something is wrong
- \* When you see a healthcare provider, bring your partner, friend or family member who can support you and help explain these symptoms are not normal for you
- \* Seek a second opinion if you don't feel listened to or your symptoms are not taken seriously

Get online support and information: [www.myheartsisters.com](http://www.myheartsisters.com) | [www.womenheart.org](http://www.womenheart.org)