

4.6 Postpartum Counseling (10 min)

Counseling

Postpartum counseling is a vital aspect of the care of women with hypertensive disorders in pregnancy. Exact frequency of postpartum follow-up visits should depend on severity of disease. The first postpartum outpatient visit should take place 1-2 weeks after delivery, and include hematologic investigation of coagulation factors, full blood count, renal and liver functions. If a patient had seizures, neurologic evaluation should take place. If blood pressure is persistently elevated after 6-8 weeks, a referral to an internal medicine specialist may be necessary.

Family planning

Dr. Sierra Washington is a specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and involved in the Rwanda Human Resources for Health initiative. In this video, Dr. Washington explains why the care of women with hypertensive disorders in pregnancy should include postpartum counseling about family planning and birth control. Controlling the disease process and blood pressure before a next pregnancy will prevent complications. Further, it will contribute to reduce the unmet need for contraception in sub-Saharan Africa.