

Hearing her can help save her life

Preventing maternal deaths and complications starts with listening.

It's no surprise that pregnancy brings many changes. But some changes are not normal:

They could indicate the kind of serious complications that cause about **700 maternal deaths every year** in the United States. Other pregnancy-related conditions continue to affect nearly 50,000 U.S. women annually over the long term.

Maternal deaths are rare but tragic, especially because most could be prevented. Prevention starts with listening to pregnant and postpartum patients and knowing the warning signs of serious complications.

Many women may not know what changes are normal—though they do tend to know when something is wrong. Understanding the symptoms that concern them ensures healthcare professionals like you can give women the care they need. This open communication can also give you a chance to educate patients on more serious warning signs, so they feel empowered to seek help.

Share the **urgent maternal warning signs** with your staff and patients as well as patients' friends and family. Make sure they know that, for pregnant women or women who were pregnant within the past year, these symptoms require immediate medical care:

- Baby's movement stopping or slowing during pregnancy
- Changes in vision
- Chest pain or fast heartbeat
- Dizziness or fainting
- Extreme swelling of hands or face
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Headache that won't go away or gets worse over time
- Heavy vaginal bleeding, discharge or fluid leaking
- Overwhelming tiredness
- Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- Severe nausea and throwing up
- Severe swelling, redness or pain in the arm or leg
- Thoughts of harming self or baby
- Trouble breathing

For more information and ready-to-share resources, explore the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's **HEAR HER campaign**.

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