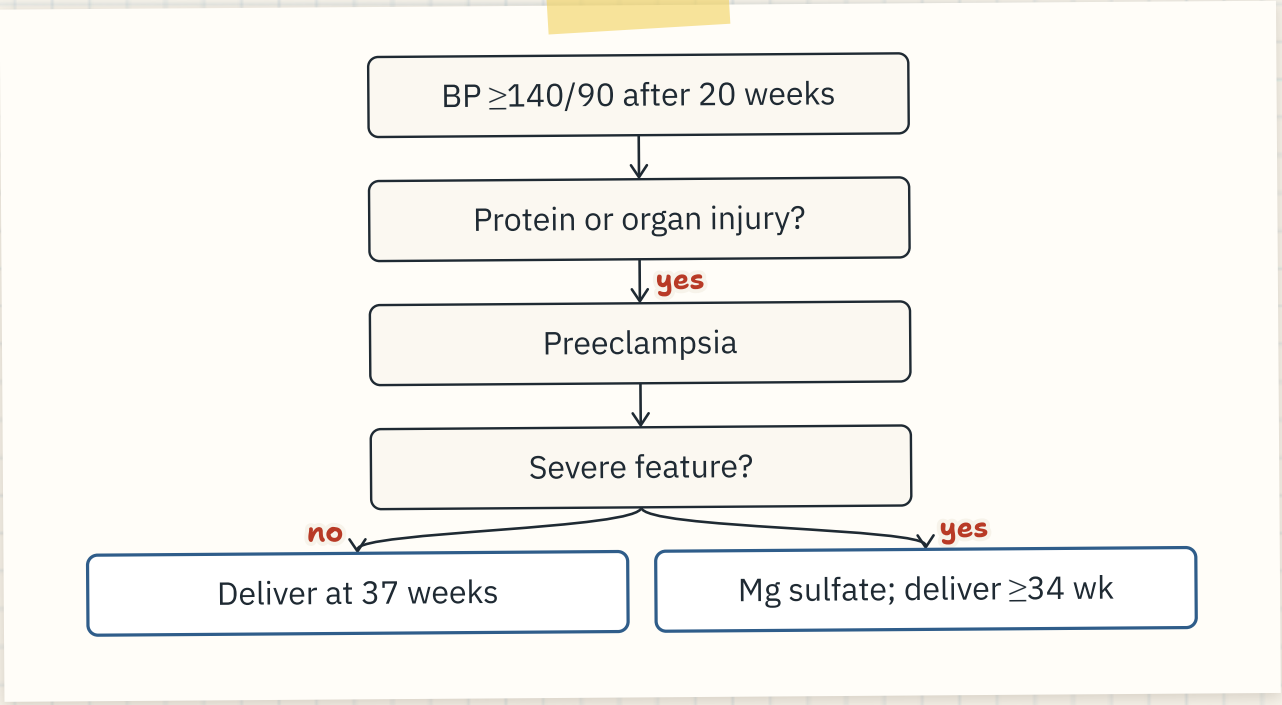
Preeclampsia in 4 steps

Criteria, severe features, magnesium and timing



Step by step

1. Hypertension: 140/90 or more, twice, 4 hours apart, after 20 weeks
2. Plus protein (≥300 mg/24 h or ratio ≥0.3) or organ dysfunction
3. Severe features: organ problems, upper abdominal pain, 160/110
4. Severe features: magnesium sulfate, calcium gluconate antidote

Situation	Plan
No severe features	Deliver at 37 weeks (or at diagnosis if later)
Severe features, 34 weeks or later	Magnesium; deliver after stabilising
Severe features, before 34 weeks, stable	Expectant, hospital, steroids
Unstable, or BP uncontrolled	Deliver without delay

Delivery timing

Rule of thumb

Protein is optional; organ dysfunction is enough

Severe features bring magnesium

Without severe features 37 weeks; with them from 34 weeks

Exam traps

- ! Do not require protein for the diagnosis.
- ! Do not judge severity by blood pressure alone: platelets 84,000/µL is a severe feature at 146/94.
- ! Blood pressure drugs alone do not prevent seizures.

Preeclampsia: criteria, severe features, magnesium and delivery timing

Video, written lesson, practice question and sources: medservatory.com/usmle-step-2-ck/ob-gyn/preeclampsia-criteria-severe-features-magnesium-delivery-timing

For exam study only, not medical advice. Follow local guidelines and your lab's ranges.
© 2026 Medservatory, a project of ADMR Solutions Ltd.
Free to print and share for personal study.