

**PPH: Readiness. Recognition**

**Quantitative Blood Loss (QBL)**

**Purpose:** Establish practices to measure quantitative blood loss in all birthing women

**When/how to use:** Use as part of initial orientation to hospital birthing service, and as annual review

As needed to help recognize and quantify blood loss following birth.

**Who to use:** All health care staff who may care for birthing women

To improve quality and safety, standardized practices should be used during all procedures. In the case of birth, if measurement of quantitative blood loss is only performed with cases of significant bleeding, then staff may be unfamiliar with the practice and therefore less likely to obtain valid information. Early and accurate recognition of excessive blood loss is an important factor in providing life-saving interventions. Accurate qualitative blood loss measurements can be obtained via:

* Collecting blood in graduated containers, including drapes with calibrated pockets
* Measuring total weight of bloody materials and subtracting the known weight of the same materials when dry. The gram weight difference between wet and dry approximates blood volume in milliliters
* Using visual aids (posters) that capture the size and appearance of blood on specific surfaces and correlating this with the volume of blood absorbed by that surface

(*Refer to the poster example and video link below.)*

* Scheduling regular time for practice using visual aids to hone and standardize observation skills

**Be aware that that recognizable signs and symptoms may not be apparent until there is a substantial blood loss. See chart below.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Blood Loss % (mL)** | **Blood Pressure (mmHg)** | **Signs and Symptoms** |
| 10-15% (500-1000 mL) | Normal | Palpitations, lightheadedness, mild increase in heart rate |
| 15-25% (1000-1500 mL) | Slightly Low | Weakness, sweating, tachycardia (100-120 bpm) |
| 25-30% (1500-2000 mL) | 70-80 | Restlessness, confusion, pallor, oliguria, tachycardia (120-140 bpm) |
| 35-45 % (2000-3000 mL) | 50-70 | Lethargy, air hunger, anuria, collapse, tachycardia (>140 bpm) |

*Adapted from: Bonnar J. Massive obstetric haemorrhage. Baillieres Best Prac Res Clin Obstet Gynaecol 2000; 14:1. Accessed from Up to Date: 12/4/2020.*

A picture containing text

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**Visual Aid for practicing estimation of blood loss**

Zuckerwise, Lisa C.; Pettker, Christian M.; Illuzzi, Jessica; Raab, Cheryl R.; Lipkind,   
Heather S.

Obstetrics & Gynecology123(5):982-986,   
May 2014.

doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000000233

Visual aid. Pocket card with images of measured volumes of artificial blood.Zuckerwise. Estimated Obstetric Blood Loss With Visual Aid.   
Obstet Gynecol 2014.

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**Quantification of Blood Loss – YouTube video**

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\_ac-aCbEn0&list=UUPrOhL3Od7ZeFDq27ycS00g*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_ac-aCbEn0&list=UUPrOhL3Od7ZeFDq27ycS00g)

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