



Pregnancy and Diabetes



Pregnancy and Gestational Diabetes



Getting regular prenatal care is important to see how you and your baby are doing. By the time you are about 24 to 28 weeks pregnant, your doctor will give a blood test to see if you have **gestational diabetes**.

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that only pregnant women get. If you have never had diabetes before but get diabetes during pregnancy, then you have gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes often goes away after the baby is born but it increases your chance of getting diabetes later.

How gestational diabetes affects you and your baby

If not treated, gestational diabetes can cause problems for both mother and baby. Some of the problems can be serious such as:

The baby grows larger than normal. This can cause discomfort to the mother, and the baby is more likely to get stuck or injured during delivery.

A large baby may need to be delivered by cesarean section (also called a C-section), which involves surgery. When a C-section is done, it takes longer for the mother to recover.

How gestational diabetes affects you and your baby

Gestational diabetes affects the baby's development. Mothers with diabetes have a higher risk of having babies with problems in their heart, kidneys and nervous system.

Babies are more likely to develop health problems after birth such as low blood sugar, jaundice, and breathing problems.

Pregnant women have a greater chance of getting high blood pressure and extra protein in their urine. If untreated, high blood pressure can lead to serious problems for both mother and baby.

If a woman has gestational diabetes in one pregnancy, she will be more likely to have it again in the next pregnancy. She is also more likely to get diabetes as she grows older.

You have a greater risk for gestational diabetes if you:



- Have a family history of diabetes
- Are overweight or very overweight
- Have a history of prediabetes outside of pregnancy. Prediabetes is a condition when blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be considered diabetes.
- Had a stillbirth or a very large baby from a past pregnancy

However, many women who get diabetes during pregnancy have no risk factors at all.

Tests for gestational diabetes

There are two types of tests:

One-hour Glucose Tolerance Test (1hr GTT)

You will be given something sweet to drink. After one hour, a doctor will take your blood to measure your blood sugar level. If the blood sugar level is normal, you probably don't have diabetes and no more tests are needed. If the blood sugar level is abnormal, then a 3-hour Glucose Tolerance Test is done.

Three-hour Glucose Tolerance Test (3hr GTT)

You cannot eat or drink anything the night before the test. In the morning, a doctor will take your blood to measure your blood sugar level. You will be given something sweet to drink, and your blood will be taken 1 hour, 2 hours and 3 hours later. If all the results show abnormal blood sugar levels, then you have gestational diabetes.

Other Tests

If you have gestational diabetes, your doctor may suggest a more tests for you to take. You may get an eye exam, electrocardiogram (EKG), and blood and urine tests during your pregnancy. Your doctor may also watch your baby's growth and development more closely.



If you have gestational diabetes...

Your doctor will work with you to keep your blood sugar at a normal level. This involves making lifestyle changes such as:

- ◆ Healthy eating - A dietitian can help you learn what to eat, when to eat and how much you should eat.
- ◆ Physical activity - Ask your doctor what exercises are best for you, how long and how often should you exercise.

If lifestyle changes are not enough, treatment may also include:

- Daily blood sugar testing to check changes in your blood sugar levels
- Take medicine such as diabetic pills and insulin shots.

Preventing gestational diabetes

Living a healthy lifestyle before pregnancy can help prevent gestational diabetes. This means eating healthy foods, getting regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight and losing weight if you are overweight.

Pregnant women should get regular prenatal check ups with their doctor. By working with your health care team (doctor, nurse, dietitian, health educator) and your family, you can control your blood sugar level, have a healthy pregnancy and delivery, and have a healthy baby.



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