

## Screening for diabetes in pregnancy

The medical term for diabetes found in pregnancy is Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM). GDM affects 5-10% of pregnant women. Women who develop diabetes in pregnancy have a greater risk of developing pregnancy related problems affecting the health of herself and her baby (e.g. maternal high blood pressure, baby born overweight). Diabetes in pregnancy usually occurs as a result of family inherited factors combined with the effect of hormone changes during pregnancy.

### Facts about GDM

- GDM is usually diagnosed between 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.
- Once the baby is born, blood glucose levels return to normal in most women.
- Women who have had GDM have a substantially increased risk of developing permanent diabetes within 10-20 years. This risk can be greatly reduced through healthy lifestyle.

### Should I be tested?

The Australasian Diabetes in Pregnancy Society recommends all women be tested for GDM. Early pregnancy screening is recommended for any of the following:

- Previous GDM
- Family history of diabetes
- Of Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian or Middle Eastern descent
- 40 years old and over
- Overweight
- Expecting twins or triplets
- Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

### Tests for diabetes in pregnancy

Your doctor or midwife will offer you a test to determine whether you have diabetes during pregnancy.

#### Oral Glucose Tolerance Test

- A blood test after fasting (no food or drinks other than water) for 10 hours.
- Drink a 75g glucose drink (usually flavoured). You will be required to **sit for 2 hours** during the test (i.e. NO walking, smoking or eating)
- A blood test will be taken at 1 and 2 hours after drinking the sweetened drink.

GDM is diagnosed in pregnancy if your blood glucose is:

- Above or equal to 5.1 mmols/L before the drink.
- Above or equal to 10.0 mmols/L one hour after the drink.
- Above or equal to 8.5 mmols/L two hours after the drink.

## A positive test...what happens now and what can I do?

- Your result will be sent to your midwife or your doctor.
- Your midwife or your doctor will notify you of the result.
- Your midwife or your doctor will refer you to the ACT Health Diabetes Service.
- You will receive a phone call to confirm an appointment for a group education with a diabetes educator and diabetes dietitian and a review appointment the following week.
- **If you do not receive a phone call within 7 working days contact your Midwife/Obstetrician or GP to ensure your referral has been sent to the Diabetes in Pregnancy Service.**

## What do I do while I wait for education?

1. Eat well and enjoy a variety of nutritious foods.
2. Avoid takeaway food, juice and any sweetened drinks.
3. Enjoy regular physical activity- take time to walk to the shops, park, or a friend's house; and
4. Make this a family affair- help everyone develop healthy lifestyle habits

## Your Future Health

Women who have diabetes in pregnancy are advised to ask their doctor for a diabetes test 6 – 12 weeks postnatally to exclude Type 2 Diabetes.

- Your postnatal Oral Glucose Tolerance Test test result needs to be discussed with your GP.

You should also have a test for diabetes at the following times:

- At least every two years
- If you are planning to have another baby
- If you become pregnant.

## Questions

Please contact your midwife or doctor with any questions or concerns.

## WEB LINKS:

<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/managing-gestational-diabetes>

<http://diabetesnsw.com.au/what-is-diabetes/gestational-diabetes/>

<https://www.ndss.com.au/gestational-diabetes>

<http://adips.org/>

<http://www.bakeridi.edu.au/Assets/Files/Healthy Eating for Gestational Diabetes 2015.pdf>

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