

Diabetes and Pregnancy

Having a Healthy Baby

You're going to have a baby! In pregnancy, your body goes through many changes. These changes affect the way your body uses sugars and starches (carbohydrates) for energy. Sometimes, these changes cause extra sugar (glucose) to collect in the blood, resulting in high blood sugar, or diabetes.

Women who are pregnant can have two types of diabetes:

Gestational diabetes...

develops during pregnancy.

This type of diabetes is usually identified at 24-28 weeks of pregnancy, but may be identified sooner. Having gestational diabetes can put you at greater risk of developing diabetes in the future.

Pregestational diabetes...

means that you had diabetes before you became pregnant.

Sometimes, this diabetes is first identified during the pregnancy.



Managing Diabetes During Pregnancy

If you have diabetes, you need extra care during and after pregnancy. Uncontrolled blood sugar can cause problems for pregnant women and newborns. It can lead to:

- * Problems during labor and delivery
- * Delivery by C-section
- * A large baby, more than 9 pounds
- * Very low blood sugar in the baby after birth
- * Higher risk of obesity and diabetes later in life for the baby

Controlling your blood sugar, eating healthy, and exercising will help reduce the risk of these problems. Your care team can help develop a plan that works best for you.

The following guidance helps with controlling blood sugar for a healthy pregnancy.



Produced by the IHS Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention
For more diabetes information and materials, visit www.ihs.gov/diabetes
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Take a picture with your cell phone.
Look at the picture later as a reminder!



Ways to a Healthy Pregnancy

- 1 Eat healthy foods.** Good nutrition is an important tool to help control blood sugar. A dietitian can work with you to create an individualized meal plan.



Eat 3 small meals a day. Choose foods and drinks low in added sugar. Include vegetables, protein, and whole grains in each meal.



Eat breakfast every day. Include a protein and a whole grain, such as an egg and a small bowl of oatmeal. Avoid having fruit with breakfast.



Eat 2 or 3 snacks a day. Combine a fruit, yogurt, or whole grain with a protein or a healthy fat, such as nuts or avocado.



Drink water, milk, and unsweetened beverages. Limit caffeine and artificial sweeteners. Avoid energy drinks, fruit juices, and sugary drinks.

2

Be active. Activity helps to lower blood sugar levels. Light exercise is best, such as walking, dancing, and yoga. Even a 15-minute walk helps lower blood sugar. Ask your provider about exercise during pregnancy.

3

Test your blood sugars often. Use a glucose meter to keep track of your blood sugar throughout the day. Your provider or team will help you learn how and when to do testing, and what your blood sugar targets should be.



4

Take your medications. If you have gestational diabetes, you may need to use insulin or other medications to control blood sugar. If you have pregestational diabetes, changes to your medications will be needed during pregnancy.

5

Avoid alcohol, tobacco, street drugs, and medications that your provider hasn't prescribed. These substances can harm you and your baby. If you need help quitting, talk to your healthcare provider who can refer you to resources.



After Your Baby is Born

- ❖ Continue to eat healthy, be physically active, and keep your weight within a healthy range.
- ❖ Breastfeed your baby to reduce your risk of diabetes. If you have diabetes, breastfeeding will help with blood sugar control. Breastfed babies have a lower risk of developing obesity and diabetes later in life.
- ❖ Get tested for diabetes six weeks after your baby is born and then once a year if you had gestational diabetes.



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