

## Gestational Diabetes: Care Instructions

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Gestational diabetes can develop during pregnancy. When you have this condition, the insulin in your body is not able to keep your blood sugar in a normal range. If you do not control your blood sugar, your baby can grow too big and have problems right after birth, such as low blood sugar.

Most of the time, gestational diabetes goes away after a baby is born. But if you have had gestational diabetes, you have a greater chance of having it in a future pregnancy and of developing type 2 diabetes. To check for diabetes, you may have a follow-up glucose tolerance test 6 weeks to 6 months after your baby is born. If the results of this test are normal, experts recommend that you get tested for type 2 diabetes at least every 3 years.

You may be able to control your blood sugar with a healthy diet and regular exercise. Staying at a healthy weight also may keep you from getting type 2 diabetes later on. If diet and exercise do not lower your blood sugar enough, you may need to take diabetes medicine or insulin.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse advice line (**811** in most provinces and territories) if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

- If your doctor prescribes insulin, inject it daily as directed. Your doctor will tell you how and when to take your insulin. If your doctor prescribes an oral medicine be sure to take it as directed.
- Check your blood sugar as directed. Your doctor will tell you how and when to check your blood sugar.

- Monitor your baby's movement as directed. Your doctor may ask you to report how many times in an hour you feel your baby move.
- Eat a balanced diet. You may want to meet with a registered dietitian. They can teach you how to spread carbohydrates through the day. This may keep your blood sugar from going up quickly after meals. If you are taking insulin, you also can learn to match the amount of insulin you take at meals to the amount of carbohydrates you eat.
- Don't diet to lose weight. It's not healthy when you're pregnant.
- Get daily exercise. This can help lower your blood sugar. Walking and swimming are good choices. But don't do any exercise unless you talk with your doctor first.



**Call 911** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness), or you suddenly become very sleepy or confused. (You may have very low blood sugar.)
- You have symptoms of high blood sugar, such as:
  - Blurred vision.
  - Trouble staying awake or being woken up.
  - Fast, deep breathing.
  - Breath that smells fruity.
  - Belly pain, not feeling hungry, and vomiting.
  - Feeling confused.

**Call your doctor or nurse advice line now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- You are sick and cannot control your blood sugar.
- You have been vomiting or have had diarrhea for more than 6 hours.
- Your blood sugar stays higher than the level your doctor has set for you.
- You have symptoms of low blood sugar, such as:
  - Sweating.
  - Feeling nervous, shaky, and weak.
  - Extreme hunger and slight nausea.
  - Dizziness and headache.
  - Blurred vision.
  - Confusion.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have a hard time knowing when your blood sugar is low.
- You have trouble keeping your blood sugar in the target range.
- You often have problems controlling your blood sugar.

