

Diabetes During Pregnancy

If you have diabetes, your body cannot properly use the food you eat for energy. When you have diabetes during pregnancy, it is called gestational diabetes.

When you eat, your body breaks down the foods into a form of energy called glucose. Glucose is another word for sugar. The glucose goes into your blood and your blood sugar rises.

Insulin is a hormone made by your pancreas. It helps glucose move from your blood into your body's cells so your body can use it for energy.

You cannot live without insulin.

Diabetes while you are pregnant

With diabetes, you and your baby do not get the energy you need from the food you eat. This is because your body does not make enough insulin for the amount of glucose that both you and your baby need for energy. This causes you to have high blood sugar during pregnancy, which can be harmful to you and to your baby. You will have blood tests done to check your glucose level.

If not treated, gestational diabetes can cause:

- A large baby, which can cause a hard delivery
- Birth defects
- A low blood sugar in your baby right after birth, which is not good for your baby
- Breathing problems for your baby

Signs

You may have no signs that your blood sugar is high. Ask your doctor about glucose testing during your pregnancy.

Your Care

The goal is to keep your blood sugar under control. Your doctor will follow your pregnancy closely to check you and your baby.

If you have high blood sugar:

- Eat a well balanced diet. A dietitian or nurse will help you plan your diet.
- Exercise each day.
- Check your blood sugar often and write it down. You will be taught to check your blood sugar using a glucose meter.
- You may need to give yourself insulin shots. If so, a nurse will show you how to do this.

Your health after your baby is born

After your baby is born, your blood sugar will likely go back to normal.

Your blood sugar will be checked 6 weeks after delivery or after you have stopped breastfeeding.

Women who have had gestational diabetes have a high rate of Type 2 diabetes later in life.

Reduce your risk by staying at a healthy weight, exercising regularly, and eating healthy foods.

Have your blood sugar tested at least once a year or as directed.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.