Did You Have Gestational Diabetes When You Were Pregnant?

What You Need to Know.

Some women get diabetes when they are pregnant. Doctors call this gestational (jes-TAY-shun-al) diabetes. Most of the time, it goes away after your baby is born. Even if the diabetes goes away, you still have a greater chance of getting diabetes later in life. Your child may also have a greater chance of being obese and getting type 2 diabetes later in life. Use this tip sheet to learn what you can do for yourself and your child.

Action steps for you

Get tested for diabetes:

- Get tested for diabetes 6 to 12 weeks after your baby is born. If the test is normal, get tested every 3 years. If the test results show that your blood sugar (glucose) is higher than normal but not high enough to be diabetes, also called prediabetes, get tested for diabetes every year.
- Talk to your doctor about your test results and what you can do to stay healthy.
- If your test results show that you could get diabetes and you are overweight, ask your doctor about what changes you can make to lose weight and for help in making them. You may need to take medicine such as metformin to help prevent type 2 diabetes.

Change the foods you eat and be more active:

- Choose healthy foods such as:
  - fruits that are fresh, frozen, or canned in water
  - lean meats, chicken and turkey with the skin removed, and fish
  - skim or low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt
  - vegetables, whole grains, dried beans, and peas
- Drink water instead of juice and regular soda.
- Eat smaller amounts of food to help you reach and stay at a healthy weight. For example, eat a 3-ounce hamburger instead of a 6-ounce hamburger. Three ounces is about the size of your fist or a deck of cards.
- Be more active each day. Try to get at least 30 minutes of activity, 5 days a week. It is okay to be active for 10 minutes at a time, 3 times a day. Walk with friends, swim, or garden to move more.
- Try to get back to a healthy weight. Talk to your health care team about a plan to help you lose weight slowly. Being at a healthy weight can help reduce your chances of getting type 2 diabetes.

Other action steps

- Tell your doctor or health care team if:
  - you had gestational diabetes
  - you want to get pregnant again
- Breastfeed your baby to help you lose weight and lower your child's chances of being overweight.
- Make sure your history of gestational diabetes is in your child's health record.

Action steps for the whole family

- Ask your doctor for an eating plan that will help your children grow and be at a healthy weight.
- Help your children make healthy food choices.
- Help your children be active for at least 60 minutes each day.
- Do things together as a family, such as making healthy meals or playing active games together.
- Limit TV, video, and computer game time to an hour or two a day.
- Contact your local parks department or local health department to learn where you can find safe places to be active and get healthy foods.

Things to remember:

- Get tested for diabetes 6 to 12 weeks after your baby is born.
- Take steps to lower your chances of getting diabetes by being more active and making healthy food choices.
- Help your children be healthy and lower their chances of getting type 2 diabetes.

National Diabetes Education Program
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HHS' NDEP is jointly sponsored by NIH and CDC with the support of more than 200 partner organizations.

NIH Publication No. 12-6019 | NDEP-88
Revised August 2012
The NDEP prints on recycled paper with bio-based ink.