

# NOW WHAT should I know about gestational diabetes?

People with gestational diabetes have normal blood sugars before pregnancy, and the large majority will have normal blood sugars immediately after they deliver. It is important to recognize and treat gestational diabetes to minimize the risk of complications to mother and baby. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that gestational diabetes affects between 2 and 10 percent of pregnancies in the United States. It usually goes away after delivery.

**FACTS FIRST:** During pregnancy a person's metabolism needs to adjust to the nutrients required for their growing baby. During pregnancy people are naturally more insulin resistant, meaning their body's cells use insulin less effectively. Gestational diabetes occurs when the pancreas, the organ that produces insulin, cannot make enough insulin to keep blood sugars normal during pregnancy.

What are the warning signs?

What is the treatment?

What happens after delivery?

## ACT ON THE FACTS:

### WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF GESTATIONAL DIABETES?

Most pregnant people don't experience signs or symptoms of gestational diabetes. In fact, a blood sugar test, typically given around 24 to 28 weeks gestation, is the only way to learn whether gestational diabetes is a concern.

More important than looking for the signs and symptoms of gestation diabetes is knowing if you're at risk. Certain people may be more likely to develop the condition, including:

- Previous birth of a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- Older maternal age, more than 35 years old
- Family history of Type 2 diabetes
- Personal history of prediabetes
- Gestation diabetes in previous pregnancies
- Overweight or obesity
- Non-white race

For more information on how to manage your diabetes, visit:

[EPDIABETES.ORG/NOW-WHAT/](https://EPDIABETES.ORG/NOW-WHAT/)

## WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

A diagnosis of gestational diabetes while already dealing with all the changes of pregnancy can be overwhelming. There are steps that can be taken to properly manage diabetes and lower the risk for gestational complications.

- Checking your blood sugars daily to ensure your levels stay in a healthy range
- Lower carbohydrate intake, and use a healthy eating plan
- Be active
- Monitor your weight
- Take insulin or medication if necessary
- Monitoring your baby

It is important you work with a registered dietitian nutritionist to help guide you through these steps.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DELIVERY:

**What to do?** Most research finds that with close monitoring and taking steps to manage gestational diabetes, women with gestational diabetes can have a safe, healthy pregnancy.

Follow-up is recommended like having your blood sugar checked at post-partum visits. Most women who have a gestational diabetes pregnancy will have normal blood sugar after pregnancy. However, some women have pre-existing diabetes and didn't know it prior to the pregnancy. Additionally, the CDC estimates about 50% of women who have gestational diabetes will go on to develop Type 2 diabetes. Thus, post-partum healthy lifestyle improvements such as diet and exercise are recommended and beneficial for reducing the incidence of type 2 diabetes in patients with a history of gestational diabetes. The goal of lifestyle intervention is weight loss leading to improvement in insulin resistance and impaired insulin secretion.



Have you taken your glucose tolerance test?



Have you set up an appointment with a registered dietician?

**YOU'RE NOT ALONE!**



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