



# Gestational Diabetes

## What You Need to Know

**Did you know that if you are pregnant, you could get gestational diabetes?**

### What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that develops only during pregnancy. Having diabetes means you have too much glucose, also called sugar, in your blood. Your body uses glucose for energy. Too much glucose in your blood is not good for you or your baby. You can protect your baby and yourself by controlling your blood glucose levels.

### Who can get gestational diabetes?

Any pregnant woman can get gestational diabetes. Your chances of getting gestational diabetes are higher if you

- are overweight
- have had gestational diabetes before
- have given birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- have a parent, brother, or sister with type 2 diabetes
- have prediabetes, meaning your blood glucose levels are higher than normal yet not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes

- are African American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic/Latina, or Pacific Islander American
- have a hormonal disorder called polycystic ovary syndrome, also known as PCOS

### How will gestational diabetes affect me and my baby?

Gestational diabetes may lead to high blood pressure and too much protein in your urine while you are pregnant. You could also have a large baby and a difficult delivery. You might even need a c-section. Your gestational diabetes will probably go away after your baby is born. However, you will be more likely to get type 2 diabetes later in life. Also, your gestational diabetes may come back if you get pregnant again.

Untreated or uncontrolled gestational diabetes can cause problems for your baby, such as

- being born with a larger than normal body, which can make delivery difficult and more dangerous
- having low blood glucose right after birth
- having breathing problems
- having a higher chance of dying before or soon after birth
- becoming overweight or obese
- getting type 2 diabetes later on





## What can I do about gestational diabetes?

Ask your doctor about getting tested for gestational diabetes. If you have gestational diabetes, you can

- talk with your doctor about what your blood glucose numbers should be.
- follow the healthy eating plan that you make with your health care team.
- be physically active—aim for 30 minutes most days of the week. Talk with your doctor about the type of activity that is best for you.
- take insulin shots, if needed. Insulin will not harm your baby.

## Where can I get more information about diabetes?

### National Diabetes Education Program

1 Diabetes Way  
Bethesda, MD 20814-9692  
Phone: 1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337)  
TTY: 1-866-569-1162  
Fax: 703-738-4929  
Email: [ndep@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ndep@mail.nih.gov)  
Internet: [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov)  
[www.yourdiabetesinfo.org](http://www.yourdiabetesinfo.org)

### National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

1 Information Way  
Bethesda, MD 20892-3560  
Phone: 1-800-860-8747  
TTY: 1-866-569-1162  
Fax: 703-738-4929  
Email: [ndic@info.niddk.nih.gov](mailto:ndic@info.niddk.nih.gov)  
Internet: [www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov)

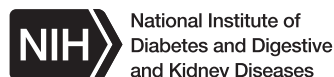
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Materials for Community Health Fairs



The NIDDK Awareness and Prevention Series is designed to make you ask yourself, "Could this be me or someone I care for?" So take a closer look. Additional information on this topic and other titles in the series is available through the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse or on the Internet at [www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov).



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