



Gestational Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes

WHAT IS GESTATIONAL DIABETES?

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is high blood sugar which develops during pregnancy and resolves after giving birth. It can occur at any stage of pregnancy, but is more common during the 2nd or 3rd trimesters.

LONG TERM EFFECTS OF GESTATIONAL DIABETES

While gestational diabetes does usually resolve after pregnancy, there may be some long-term implications of the condition:



Increased risk of gestational diabetes in future pregnancies



Increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes in the future



Increased risk of child developing type 2 diabetes and obesity.

Type 2 diabetes is a lifelong condition which involves high levels of sugar in the blood. This sugar imbalance can affect important organs, such as the heart, eyes and nerves.

What to expect after birth

Before you leave the hospital after giving birth:

- Your blood glucose level should be measured. You
- should stop taking the diabetes medications that were prescribed throughout your pregnancy.

6-13 weeks after giving birth:

You should have a blood test again to check for type 2 diabetes.

- Fasting plasma glucose test or
 - HbA1c blood test
- Normal results --> annual HbA1c blood test

Abnormal results --> referral into the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme, if eligible. Lifestyle advice may also be provided to help you reduce the risk of developing T2DM.

Every year:

- You should have a blood glucose test to monitor your risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- If you experience any symptoms of diabetes do not wait for your annual check-up. Book an appointment with your GP.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

While you can't prevent gestational diabetes, there are some things that you can do to reduce your risks, as well as managing your glucose level without medication:



Keeping active
before, during and after pregnancy



Eating healthily
cutting down on sugar



Managing your weight
protecting your blood pressure and cholesterol

FUTURE PREGNANCIES

- Check for Type 2 Diabetes before conception with your GP
- If you have diabetes, you should be referred to a diabetes pre-conception clinic
- Let your healthcare team know about your next pregnancy as they can give further advice about your antenatal care
- Screening for diabetes during your next pregnancy will be done earlier and a second test at 24-28 weeks if the first test was normal



References

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