



Women's Health for Life, Inc.

1005 Bellefontaine Ave., Suite 175
Lima, OH 45804-2894
Tel. No.: 419-227-2727

Gestational Diabetes

What is it?

Gestational Diabetes is high blood sugar that occurs only in pregnant women who do not already have diabetes. It usually appears around the 24th week of pregnancy. Hormones that are made to help the baby grow can block the effect of the mother's insulin. Insulin is what allows sugar to enter the body's cells so that it can be used for energy. **Insulin resistance** is when something in the body does not let insulin do its job. In most pregnant women, the body can make enough insulin to overcome this resistance. In other pregnant women, the body cannot make enough insulin resulting in high blood sugar. These women have gestational diabetes.

What are the risk factors for gestational diabetes?

- You are 25 or older
- You are overweight
- You have a family history of diabetes
- You have given birth to a baby weighing 9 pounds or more
-

What can happen if I have gestational diabetes?

- You can have a large baby (macrosomia). The extra sugar in your blood goes into your baby causing your baby to grow bigger and fatter than normal. This may make delivery harder and increase the risk of injury to the baby during delivery.
- Your baby's lungs and liver may not be fully mature resulting in difficulty breathing and jaundice.
- You can have urinary tract infections (bladder and kidney infections) because the extra sugar in your blood is leaked into your urine making it easier for bacteria to grow in your bladder
- Gestational diabetes can also make it more likely for you to have yeast and bacterial infections of the vagina. This could result in an infection of the membranes around your baby and cause early labor.

How do I know if I have gestational diabetes?

Your doctor will have you take a **glucose tolerance test** between your 24th and 28th weeks of pregnancy. You fail this test if your 1 hour blood sugar is higher than 135. If you fail this test, your doctor will either diagnose you with gestational diabetes (if your blood sugar level is very high) or she will have you take a **3 hour glucose tolerance test**. You fail this test if two of your blood sugar values are high. If you fail this 3 hour test then you have gestational diabetes.

How do I control my gestational diabetes?

- Many people can control their gestational diabetes by diet changes. They eat fewer carbohydrates (bread, potatoes, sweets) and more protein and vegetables. They eat fruit instead of drinking fruit juices and increase the amount of water and fiber in their diet. They also eat smaller, more frequent meals to keep their blood sugars stable. They also make sure that they get enough exercise. Other people control their gestational diabetes by taking insulin shots through a very small needle.
-

Where can I get more information on gestational diabetes?

- <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/gesttoc.htm>
- http://www.diabetes.org/main/info/affected/women/gestation_diab.jsp