

# Gestational Diabetes

All women thinking about becoming pregnant should take [folic acid](#) to help prevent birth defects



## What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that develops or is first recognized during pregnancy.

## How do I know if I am at risk?

You are at risk for gestational diabetes if you

- Had a previous pregnancy with gestational diabetes.
- Had a baby born weighing over 9 pounds.
- Are overweight or obese.
- Are more than 25 years old.
- Have a family history of diabetes.
- Are African American, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.
- Are being treated for HIV.

## How can I find out if I have gestational diabetes?

- Most women are screened for gestational diabetes at 24-28 weeks gestation during prenatal care.
- If you or your health care provider has concerns, your health care provider may screen you earlier.

## Why is gestational diabetes a problem?

For you:

- Your risk of developing type 2 diabetes is increased.
- You are more likely to have a large baby (a condition known as macrosomia). This may cause discomfort during the last few months of pregnancy.
- Having a large baby may lead to a cesarean section (C-section). If you had a C-section, it may take longer for you to recover after the birth.

For your baby:

- Large babies are more likely to suffer from birth trauma.
- Soon after delivery, your baby may have low blood sugar. This can be treated with early feedings and should not result in any long-term consequences after birth.

## What should I do before becoming pregnant?

You should take the following steps before becoming pregnant:

- [Talk with a health care provider](#) about how to reduce your risk of gestational diabetes before becoming pregnant.
- Be physically active- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity five days a week. This could be brisk walking, yard work, and actively playing with children, for example, or riding bicycles or playing soccer.
- Make [healthy](#) food choices by eating a variety of foods that are low in fat and reducing the number of calories eaten per day.
- [Maintain a healthy weight.](#)





All women benefit from breastfeeding their babies. Find out more about breastfeeding at: <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding>



## What can I do during pregnancy if I have gestational diabetes?

- Go to all of your prenatal visits.
- Follow your health care providers' recommendations for controlling your blood sugar. This can help reduce your risk of having a large baby.
- [Stay physically active.](#)
- [Make](#) healthy food choices.
- Ask your health care provider to see a [dietitian](#) or a [diabetes educator](#).

## What can I do after my pregnancy to reduce my chance of developing type 2 diabetes in the future?

Follow up regularly with your health care provider.

- [Get tested for diabetes 6 to 12 weeks after your baby is born, then every 1 to 3 years.](#)
- [Stay physically active.](#)
- [Make healthy food choices.](#)
- [Maintain a healthy weight.](#)
- Ask your health care provider about type 2 diabetes prevention and care after delivery.
- Ask to see a [dietitian](#) or a [diabetes educator](#) to learn more about type 2 diabetes prevention.

For more information about gestational diabetes and the prevention of type 2 diabetes, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes>

[http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/pregnancy\\_gateway/diabetes.html](http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/pregnancy_gateway/diabetes.html)

<http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/gestational/>

[http://ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/NeverTooEarly\\_Tipsheet.pdf](http://ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/NeverTooEarly_Tipsheet.pdf)

<http://diabetes.org/gestational-diabetes.jsp>

For more information about pregnancy care and self management of gestational diabetes during pregnancy, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/MaternalInfantHealth/index.htm>

[http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/pregnancy\\_gateway/documents/Diabetes\\_and\\_Pregnancy508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/pregnancy_gateway/documents/Diabetes_and_Pregnancy508.pdf)

For information about healthy food choices, physical activity, and obesity prevention, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/>