

Gestational Diabetes



Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that only occurs during pregnancy. The American Diabetes Association explains gestational diabetes as the mother's body being unable to make and use all the insulin it needs during pregnancy. Gestational diabetes can increase the risk for a newborn to have low blood sugar, breathing problems, obesity, and type 2 diabetes later in life.

Screening and Risk Factors

According to Mayo Clinic, screening for gestational diabetes is usually done between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy; however, doctors may test women at high risk for gestational diabetes sooner.

The following are risk factors for gestational diabetes:

- being overweight or obese
- not being physically active
- personal history of prediabetes or gestational diabetes
- family history of type 2 diabetes
- having previously delivered a baby weighing more than nine pounds
- being of a certain race or ethnicity, such as African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/Alaska Native, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- having polycystic ovary syndrome



Eat healthy foods high in fiber and low in fat and calories.

Symptoms and Treatment

Gestational diabetes usually doesn't cause any noticeable symptoms. Rarely, it can cause excessive urination and thirst. Women with gestational diabetes will be closely monitored throughout their pregnancy. According to Mayo Clinic, treatment often includes changes to diet, an increase in physical activity, daily

blood sugar testing, and medication if needed. After delivery, blood sugar levels should return to normal. However, once a woman has had gestational diabetes, the chances are high it will return in future pregnancies as well as increase the risk for developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Prevention

Since the health of a baby starts with its mother's health, Mayo Clinic recommends women take the following steps to lower their risk for gestational diabetes before getting pregnant:

- eat healthy foods high in fiber and low in fat and calories
- get 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week
- start pregnancy at a healthy weight
- don't gain more weight than recommended

It's not easy to learn you might have a condition that can affect you and your unborn baby's health. Talk with your doctor about the steps you can take to reduce any complications from gestational diabetes. With proper care and treatment, women with gestational diabetes can have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.