

Screening for Gestational Diabetes

Information for patients and families

What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is a type of diabetes that some women get during pregnancy. It happens when your body cannot produce enough insulin as your baby grows.

All pregnant women should be screened for gestational diabetes between 24 to 28 weeks of pregnancy.

What does gestational diabetes mean for my baby?

Gestational diabetes can be managed and you can expect to have a healthy baby. Without treatment, gestational diabetes increases the chance that your baby will too big, which may cause a difficult delivery, and may require you to have a Caesarian section. Follow-up and treatment reduces these risks.

What are the risk of gestational diabetes for my baby?

1. Neonatal hypoglycemia (baby's sugars go low at delivery time),
2. Hyperbilirubinemia,
3. Jaundice (yellowing of skin in baby)

What is a Oral Glucose tolerance test or OGTT?

This is a screening test for gestational diabetes. For this test you will get a drink with a specific amount of sugar, then have a blood test. Follow these instructions:

1. Drink the whole bottle in 5 minutes.

2. Do not walk around or smoke for the next hour.
3. Go to the lab 10 minutes before the hour is completed.
4. Go directly to the front desk and tell staff you are ready for your GCT test. Please tell the staff if you could not drink the whole bottle or vomited afterwards.

What happens if the test result is normal?

- If your blood sugar is less than 7.8 mmol/L, you have a lower risk of getting gestational diabetes. Your doctor will follow up at your next appointment.

What happens if the test result is positive?

- If your blood sugar is above 11.0 mmol/L, your doctor will diagnose you with gestational diabetes.
- If your blood sugar is between 7.8 and 11.0 mmol/L, your doctor will order another test to see if you have gestational diabetes.

What happens if I am diagnosed with gestational diabetes?

- You will meet with the Diabetes Team 1 to 2 weeks after learning you have gestational diabetes. The team will work with you to manage your blood sugar. You will meet with this team every 1 to 3 weeks during your pregnancy.

What can I do to control my blood sugar?

1. Follow up with your diabetes team as instructed.
2. Avoid foods with sugar including pop, juice, desserts, candy, syrups, sugar and honey. Drink only water, milk and small amounts of coffee/tea.
3. Eat a well-balanced diet until you are seen by your diabetes team.