

If You Have Gestational Diabetes

What to expect

This handout explains what to expect if you have gestational diabetes.

If you are diagnosed with gestational diabetes, your pregnancy health care provider, nurse, and dietitian will work with you to help you have a healthy pregnancy and baby.

- Your dietitian will teach you diet changes to help control your blood sugar. For many women, making changes in their diet is often all that is needed to control blood sugar.
- You will learn how to use a glucose monitor to check your blood sugar. We will ask you to send us your blood sugar test results each week so that we can review them.



If you have gestational diabetes, you will meet with one of our dietitians to learn about diet changes to help you control your blood sugar.

If changes to your diet do not control your blood sugar, your doctor may start you on an oral medicine (medicine you take by mouth). Or, your doctor may refer you to a provider at the Diabetes Clinic at the Maternal and Infant Care Clinic at University of Washington Medical Center. This provider will work with you and your doctor to create a plan to help you control your blood sugars.

Diet Changes

You can begin making these diet changes now, before you meet with a dietitian:

- Avoid juice, sweets, and sugary foods.
- Have some protein at breakfast.
- Eat smaller meals with snacks in between. For example, eat 3 meals and 3 snacks each day.

Testing Your Blood Glucose

Please test your blood sugar 4 times a day at these times:

- When you wake up (before you eat breakfast):
Your goal is 95 mg/dl or less.
- 1 hour after breakfast, lunch, **and** dinner:
Your goal is 140 mg/dl or less.

If you miss this 1 hour test after a meal:

- Check your blood sugar 2 hours after the meal:
Your goal is 120 mg/dl or less.

Sending in Your Blood Sugar Test Results

Please send us your blood sugar test results every week. Your dietitian and nurse will talk with you about how to do this at your first meeting with them. We prefer you send in your test results through eCare messaging (if you use that program) or by email.

Your dietitian and doctor will review your blood sugar test results to see how well your plan to control your blood sugars is working. Your dietitian or team nurse will send you a return message within 2 days of receiving your results. The message may be that you are doing well controlling your blood sugars and do not need to make any changes. Or, the message may be that you need to make some changes to your diet or consider taking medicine to control your blood sugars.

If you have questions or have not received a message or phone call within 2 days of sending in your results, please call the clinic at 206-598-5500. Press 4 when the greeting starts (to bypass the contact center), and ask to speak with your team nurse.

Diabetes After Giving Birth

Gestational diabetes often goes away after a woman gives birth, but not always. Ask your doctor if you should stop checking your blood sugars after delivery.

Postpartum 2-hour Glucose Tolerance Test

A 2-hour glucose tolerance test (GTT) should be done 6 to 12 weeks after you give birth to check if you still have diabetes. Diabetes is diagnosed if you have these glucose levels:

- Fasting: 126 mg/dl or higher
- 2 hours after eating: 200 mg/dl or higher

Instructions for Your 2-Hour GTT

- On the morning of your test, do not eat or drink anything for at least 8 hours before your first blood draw.
- Go to the lab. The lab will do your first blood draw (a *fasting sample*), then give you the sugary drink.
- Drink the amount of the sugary liquid that equals 75 grams of sugar, and note the **exact** time. Try to drink the liquid within 1 to 2 minutes.
- Your blood draw must occur exactly 2 hours later.
- Do **not** eat or drink anything else in the 2 hours before this blood draw.
- Go to the lab window about 10 to 15 minutes before your 2-hour blood draw. Tell lab staff the time that you must have your blood draw.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Women's Health Care
Center: 206-598-5500
(press 4 when the greeting begins)