

## Maternity

# What is Gestational Diabetes?

This leaflet will help you understand gestational diabetes.

### What is diabetes?

Diabetes happens when there is too much sugar (glucose) in the blood.

### What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that can happen during pregnancy. It usually goes away after the baby is born. Sometimes, diabetes may have there before but is found for the first time during pregnancy.

### Why does gestational diabetes happen?

There are two main reasons:

1. During pregnancy, the body makes extra hormones that make it harder for insulin to work properly, so your body needs more insulin to do its job. Insulin is a hormone that helps control blood sugar.
2. Some women's bodies can't make enough insulin to handle these changes.

### How common is gestational diabetes?

Gestational Diabetes happens in about 3 to 5 out of every 100 pregnancies. This means about 1 in 25 women will have gestational diabetes during pregnancy.

### You are more likely to get gestational diabetes if:

- You had it during a past pregnancy
- Someone in your family has diabetes (parent, brother or sister)
- You had a big baby before (over 4.5kg or 10 pounds)



## Patient Information

- You are of South Asian, Middle Eastern, African or Caribbean origin
- You are over 35 years old
- You have had a stillbirth, or more than 1 miscarriage
- You are overweight (BMI over 30)
- You have Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
- A scan shows extra fluid around your baby

If you have any of these risk factors, we recommend you are tested for gestational diabetes during pregnancy.

### **How is gestational diabetes treated?**

Blood glucose levels can be controlled by eating healthy, cutting down on sugar, doing more exercise. If that is not enough, tablets and/or insulin treatment will help control your blood glucose levels.

### **Why is gestational diabetes important?**

Gestational diabetes can cause problems for both you and your baby if not treated properly.

The risks to the mother include:

- A higher risk of needing a caesarean section.
- High blood pressure in pregnancy
- Developing diabetes in later life

The risks to the baby include:

- Growing too big and weighing over 4.5 kg (over 10 lbs)
- Trouble during birth because of baby's size
- Breathing difficulties after birth
- Low blood sugar in the first 48 hours (2 days)
- Needing care in a special care baby unit to help glucose levels
- Becoming overweight later in life
- A small risk of a stillbirth.

**They diabetes pregnancy team will work with you to lower these risks.**

### **Will your care be different if you have gestational diabetes?**

Yes. At UHCW, there is a specialist team of midwives, nurses, doctors and dieticians who will help you.

You will:

- Have more check-ups
- Get extra scans to check your baby's growth
- Have more of your care at the hospital

Our aim is to help you have a healthy pregnancy and deliver your baby safely.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 02476967350 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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#### **Document History**

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