

How to reduce your future risk of developing diabetes

Irrespective of your follow-up results, you should:

Exercise more

- Be physically active 30 minutes a day, at least 5 days a week, enough to make you breathless.
- Choose an activity you enjoy. This could be swimming, yoga, walking or jogging.

Eat more healthily

- Make healthy food choices and eat smaller portions.
- Increase fibre intake.
- Choose more fruits and vegetables, beans and whole grains.
- Cut down on foods that are high in sugar and fat.
- Avoid fried food.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Achieving Healthy Weight

- After the pregnancy you should try to be the right weight for your height (BMI - normal body mass index).
- It is important to remember that you do need extra energy for breast feeding, so you must consider this if you do decide to try to lose weight.
- You can get advice about losing weight and healthy eating from your GP, practice nurse, dietitian and health visitor.

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© Perinatal Institute, 6 Greenfield Crescent, Edgbaston, Birmingham.B15 3BE
notes@perinatal.org.uk 0121 607 0101.

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Post Natal Care for Gestational diabetes (GDM)

- Once your baby is born, all diabetes medication will be stopped.
- Your blood glucose levels will be monitored in hospital to make sure they have returned to normal.
- If your glucose levels remain high, your health care team will discuss this with you before going home.
- Your baby will be monitored in hospital for at least 24 hours after birth. This is to make sure your baby is feeding well and his/her blood glucose levels are stable.
- Feed your baby as soon as possible after birth. Breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for your baby; gives extra protection against infection and promotes bonding.



Follow up

You should be offered a fasting glucose test usually from 6 - 13 weeks after the birth of your baby. If this test is not possible, a HbA1c can be used instead.

If this is normal you should have a test for diabetes every 12 months. This can be arranged at your GP surgery.

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of diabetes e.g.

- Passing more urine than normal
- Increased thirst
- Tiredness
- Unexplained weight loss
- Frequent infections
- Vaginal thrush
- Blurred vision

Please see your GP/Practice Nurse for further advice and screening if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

These symptoms occur because some or all of the glucose stays in the blood, and isn't being used as fuel for energy. The body tries to reduce blood glucose levels by flushing the excess glucose out of the body in the urine. Frequent infections are common because high glucose (sugar) levels increase the chance of bacteria (germs) building up in your body.

Early diagnosis, treatment and good blood glucose control are important to benefit your health and reduce the chances of developing serious complications. Untreated diabetes affects many major organs in your body, including your heart, blood vessels, nerves, eyes and kidneys. Being diagnosed early and controlling your blood sugar levels can help prevent these complications.



What is your future risk of Diabetes?

- For most women gestational diabetes goes away after they have had the baby.
- However, the chance of developing diabetes later in life remains high and therefore it is important to adopt a healthy lifestyle to help prevent diabetes from occurring.
- If you become pregnant, it is likely that you will have diabetes again. Therefore, **PLAN your pregnancy** and tell your GP/practice nurse or midwife as soon as you are thinking about stopping contraception.

As soon as you find out you are pregnant, contact your midwife or diabetes/antenatal team, as you will be offered either home blood glucose monitoring or an oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT).