

Gestational Diabetes: What You Need to Know

What is gestational diabetes?

Pregnant women who have never had diabetes before but who have had high blood sugar (glucose) levels during pregnancy are said to have gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes affects about 7% of all pregnancies, resulting in more than 200,000 cases annually.

What causes gestational diabetes?

Doctors aren't certain about what causes gestational diabetes, but there are some clues. The placenta supports the baby as it grows. Hormones from the placenta help the baby develop. These hormones also block the action of the mother's insulin in her body. This problem is called insulin resistance. Insulin resistance makes it hard for the mother's body to use insulin. You may need up to three times as much insulin.

Gestational diabetes starts when your body is not able to make and use all the insulin it needs for pregnancy. Without enough insulin, glucose cannot leave the blood and be changed into energy. Glucose builds up in the blood to high levels. This is called hyperglycemia.

Good prenatal care: checking your blood glucose

- Blood checks will help keep your blood glucose on target.
- Check your blood glucose levels at the time your healthcare team advises; this may be up to eight tests daily and will probably include after-meal checks.

- Write down your results.
- Keep notes about your meal plan and exercise.
- Make changes to your meal plan and insulin only with the advice of your healthcare team.

How is gestational diabetes treated?

Because gestational diabetes can hurt you and your baby, you need to start treatment quickly. Untreated or poorly controlled gestational diabetes can cause your baby to grow too large. The baby may have difficulty with low blood sugar at birth and a higher risk of breathing problems.

Treatment for gestational diabetes aims to keep blood glucose levels equal to those of pregnant women who don't have gestational diabetes. Treatment for gestational diabetes always includes special meal plans and scheduled physical activity. Treatment may also include daily blood glucose testing and insulin injections. You will need help from your doctor, nurse educator, and other members of your healthcare team so that your treatment for gestational diabetes can be changed as needed.

For you as a mother-to-be, treatment for gestational diabetes helps lower the risk of a cesarean section birth that very large babies may require. Sticking with your treatment for gestational diabetes will help give you a healthy pregnancy and birth, and may help your baby avoid future health issues.

Gestational diabetes: looking ahead

Gestational diabetes usually goes away after pregnancy. You should have your blood sugar checked at least six weeks after you have your baby.

Once you've had gestational diabetes, your chances are two in three that it will return in future pregnancies. In a few women, however, pregnancy uncovers type 1 or type 2 diabetes. It is hard to tell whether these women have gestational diabetes or have just started showing their diabetes during pregnancy. These women will need to continue diabetes treatment after pregnancy.

ACCU-CHEK® Meters

Roche Diagnostics, the maker of ACCU-CHEK products, offers the meters below. Should you have any questions regarding selection of one of these meters or regarding any ACCU-CHEK product, you may contact ACCU-CHEK Customer Care toll-free at 1-800-858-8072, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Assistance is also available in English, Spanish, and many other languages. You can also visit the ACCU-CHEK Web site at www.accu-chek.com.*

ACCU-CHEK Compact

- Easier testing with no strip handling
- Flexibility of alternate-site testing (6 total sites)†
- Uses Compact Test Drum



Other features include:

- Results in 8 seconds
- Requires 1.5 microliters of blood
- Can hold 100 test results
- Uses two AAA batteries

ACCU-CHEK Active

- Flexibility of alternate-site testing (6 total sites)†
- Apply blood to the test strip in or out of the meter
- Uses ACCU-CHEK Active Test Strips

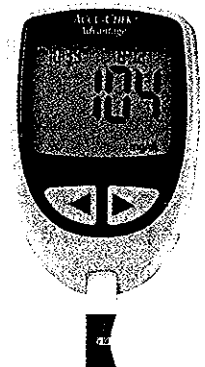


Other features include:

- Results in 5 seconds
- Requires 1 microliter of blood
- Can hold 200 test results
- Provides 7-day and 14-day averages
- Uses one CR 2032 lithium battery

ACCU-CHEK Advantage

- Large display
- Expanded memory
- Curved test strip for easier blood application



Other features include:

- Result time and sample size dependent upon strip
- Can hold 480 test results
- Provides 7-day, 14-day, and 30-day averages
- Uses one 3-volt lithium battery

ACCU-CHEK Compact, ACCU-CHEK Active, and ACCU-CHEK Advantage Meters can be used with the **ACCU-CHEK Compass Software and ACCU-CHEK Pocket Compass Software.**

Other features include:

- Creates customizable reports to share with your doctor
- Automatically tracks average day trends and statistics
- Electronic diary eliminates the need for a logbook

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†Alternate-site testing = ability to test on body sites other than fingers; consult the owner's manual.

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