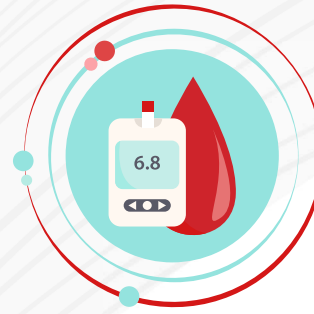


American Heart Association.



# Gestational Diabetes

## What Is Gestational Diabetes?

Gestational diabetes starts during pregnancy when blood glucose (also called blood sugar) is too high in a woman's body.

## What Are the Risks of Gestational Diabetes?

The condition may be harmful for both women and their baby if left untreated. The risks include:

### For Women



High blood pressure



Increased weight gain



Preterm birth and other delivery complications



Future risk of developing heart disease and Type 2 diabetes

### For the Baby



Being born too early



Having breathing problems



Likely becoming overweight and later developing Type 2 diabetes

# Three Ways to Manage Gestational Diabetes

Your health care professional will determine the best way to manage your gestational diabetes. Checking blood sugar daily may be necessary to make sure levels stay in a healthy range.



## A healthy diet

Eat nutritious foods throughout the day to help keep blood sugar stable.



## Regular exercise

Be active to help control blood sugar and reduce the body's need for insulin. Check with your health care team about the right exercise for you.



## Insulin or other medication

Take medications as prescribed, and don't stop without a health care professional's approval.

## Eating Well With Gestational Diabetes

Food choices are important. Pregnant women with gestational diabetes should:

- Eat the same amount and types of food (carbohydrates, fats and proteins) daily.
- Do not skip meals and snacks.
- Pick lean proteins.
- Choose plenty of whole fruits and vegetables.
- Opt for high-fiber whole grains. Skip simple carbohydrates because they cause blood sugar to rise quickly.
- Limit beverages and foods high in added sugar.



## Other Things to Do Before and During Pregnancy

- ✓ **Start early.** Ideally, women should reach their recommended body weight and exercise regularly before becoming pregnant to support a healthy pregnancy, which also helps to prevent gestational diabetes. If you get a gestational diabetes diagnosis, take action quickly. The condition is treatable.
- ✓ **Get expert advice.** A health care professional can help create nutrition and exercise plans that are safe for you and your developing child.
- ✓ **Attend all prenatal appointments.** These checkups will monitor your overall health and weight gain as well as fetal growth and development.

## What to Do After Delivery

For most women, gestational diabetes goes away soon after delivery. If it doesn't, it's called Type 2 diabetes.

After pregnancy, women who had gestational diabetes should:

- ✓ **Get tested for diabetes six to 12 weeks after delivery.**
- ✓ **Repeat diabetes testing every one to three years.**
- ✓ **Keep exercising and eating well to prevent or delay getting Type 2.**