

How best to prepare for Blood Sugar Tests

Monitoring your blood sugar levels on a regular basis plays a fundamental role to take appropriate treatment decisions⁸. To get reliable results, some basic preparations should be considered when performing a blood sugar test:

1. Since traces of sweat, moisture etc. on the skin can influence the blood sugar measurements⁹, always wash your hands with soap and warm water, rinse and dry well
2. Lancets are single-use products: Make sure to use a new lancet for every blood sugar test
3. Follow the instructions according to the user guide of your blood sugar meter

These steps will help you obtain a clean blood sample.

For more information and personalised advice about Diabetes and Pregnancy, please contact your Healthcare Professional.

More information on Gestational Diabetes:
www.diabetes.ascensia.co.za

Caution: This brochure does not replace your Healthcare Professional advice.

Sources:

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Pharmaco Distribution (Pty) Ltd.
3 Sandown Valley Crescent, South Tower,
1st Floor, Sandton, 2196
P.O. Box 786522, Sandton, 2146, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 784 0077. Website: www.pharmaco.co.za



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Diabetes & Pregnancy

Gestational Diabetes



Diabetes and Pregnancy

Diabetes During Pregnancy

When you are pregnant, you can develop high blood sugar levels (so-called **gestational diabetes**), even if you have never had diabetes before.

Causes of Gestational Diabetes¹

The exact cause of gestational diabetes is not yet known. One reason could be that the hormones released by the placenta, which help the baby grow, prevent the insulin from working properly in the mother's body. This is called 'insulin resistance'.

Gestational diabetes develops when the mother's body cannot produce enough insulin for the extra needs during pregnancy.

Insulin is needed to make the sugar move from the blood into the cells, where the sugar is turned into energy. If there is not enough insulin, the levels of sugar in the blood become too high (so-called **hyperglycaemia**).

Effects on you as the Mother²

Blood sugar usually returns to normal levels after delivery. But if you've had it once, there is a two-in-three chance that it may reappear in future pregnancies².

Sometimes, the diagnosis of gestational diabetes reveals a pre-existing type 1 or type 2 diabetes. If the diabetes existed before pregnancy, it will not go away and the treatment will have to be continued after delivery of the baby.

Women who have had gestational diabetes are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life³.

Effects on your Baby⁴

Gestational diabetes usually diagnosed in the second half of pregnancy, while the baby is actively growing.

Gestational diabetes must be treated in order to avoid negative consequences for you and the baby!

In gestational diabetes the high blood sugar levels are passed from the mother's to the baby's blood. If the mother's blood sugar are higher than normal, then the baby also receives more sugar than

normal. Storing this extra energy causes your baby to grow bigger and may lead to a condition called Large-for-Gestational Age (LGA).

Because of the extra insulin made by the baby's pancreas, newborns may have very low blood sugar levels at birth and are also at higher risk for breathing problems. Babies born with excess insulin become children who are at risk for obesity and adults who are at risk for type 2 diabetes⁴.

Treating Gestational Diabetes²

It is important to follow the recommendations of your Healthcare Professional and begin, upon his advice, the prescribed treatment **as soon as possible**.

The goal is to keep blood sugar levels in a healthy range that is comparable to pregnant women without gestational diabetes.

An individual dietary plan and regular physical activities are always part of the therapy. Blood sugar checks and insulin injections may also be necessary.

Successful control of gestational diabetes may help to **reduce your risk of a caesarean section birth** that may be necessary if your baby is too large².

Healthy Eating⁵

Taking care of a healthy diet during pregnancy is important for several reasons.

Watch your carbohydrates intake and test your blood sugar on a regular basis.



Avoiding Hypoglycaemia⁶

Type and duration of physical activities have different effects on blood sugar levels. Moderate exercises can lower blood sugar levels. Certain sugar-lowering medications, e.g. insulin, in combination with prolonged moderate exercising can cause **hypoglycaemia** (blood sugar levels go too low, which can become dangerous). Speak to your doctor if you take any medication to lower your blood sugar levels.

On the other hand, intensive exercise can raise blood sugar levels, since the body releases stored sugar to cope with high energy demands.

To be sure, test your blood sugar levels before and after exercise.

Checking your Blood Sugar During Gestational Diabetes is Important⁷

To prevent the negative consequences of gestational diabetes, your blood sugar levels should be kept within a certain target range. Blood sugar monitoring is carried out with a blood sugar meter. You simply take a drop of blood by pricking a finger and the meter tells you how much sugar is in the blood at that time.



Ask your doctor about your individual blood sugar target range.