

Patient information

Life after gestational diabetes

Directly after delivery

Stop all your blood sugar testing and you can return to a normal diet. Stop any diabetes medication that you may have been taking during pregnancy.

Your baby will need to have his/her blood sugar levels checked after the first feed and before the next two feeds and if these are all within a normal range no further treatment will be required.

Long-term effects of gestational diabetes

Gestational diabetes normally goes away after birth. But some people who have had it are more likely to develop:

- Gestational diabetes again in future pregnancies.
- Type 2 diabetes – a lifelong type of diabetes. There is a 7-fold increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes in later life (Diabetes UK) and NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) maintain that up to 50 % of people diagnosed with gestational diabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within five years of giving birth.

To ensure that the gestational diabetes has disappeared, and type 2 diabetes has not developed, you should have a blood test called HbA1c approximately 12 weeks after giving birth and this can be undertaken at your GP Surgery. It is then recommended that you have this test at your GP Surgery every year. Try and use the birthday of your baby to remind you, as your GP may not contact you to make an appointment. You should have the tests even if you feel well, as many people with diabetes do not have any symptoms. If you develop symptoms that could suggest a high blood sugar, such as increased thirst, a dry mouth or needing to urinate more often than usual, do not wait until your next test but contact your GP to have a review.

The below box shows the parameters of the post-natal blood test and if your blood test result puts you in the higher risk group, you can ask your GP for advice and referral to

The Diabetes Prevention Programme or refer yourself. The website address is: <https://www.preventing-diabetes.co.uk> and you can complete the 'Know Your Risk' section. For any questions or for help in understanding more about the scheme, please contact: **0333 577 3010**.

HbA1c	Diabetes risk
< 39 mmol (5.7%)	Low probability of having diabetes at the moment
39 – 47 mmol (5.7 – 6.4%)	High risk of developing type 2 diabetes
≥48 mmol (6.5%)	Likely to have type 2 diabetes

How can I prevent diabetes in later life?

To reduce your risk of getting diabetes try and maintain a healthy weight, ideally your body mass index (BMI) should be between 18 and 25. Eat a balanced diet and exercise regularly. The recommendation for exercise is at least three times a week for at 20 minutes or longer that increases your heart rate and makes you feel out of breath.

Contraception

There are many different options for contraception, these include: intra-uterine system i.e. Mirena coil, vaginal coil, diaphragm, fertility awareness, condoms, contraception pill, patch and injection.

For more information please see: <https://www.contraceptionchoices.org>

What do I do if I become pregnant again?

Please refer yourself via the email link to the hospital where you wish to have your care so that you can be in the optimal health at the beginning of your pregnancy. We will offer you an early glucose tolerance test (GTT) to detect whether gestational diabetes is developing again

Contact details are:

- Self-referral Link: www.wsh.nhs.uk/pregnancy
- Communication Midwives Hub Number: 01284713755
- Community Midwives Email: wsh-tr.communitymidwives@nhs.net
- Further Reading: Diabetes in pregnancy: management from preconception to the postnatal period NICE guideline Published: December 2020
nice.org.uk/guidance/ng3

Clinical research

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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