



COMMON QUESTIONS RAISED BY PREGNANT WOMEN WITH DIABETES

WILL MY BABY HAVE DIABETES?

For you, as a woman with diabetes, there is almost no greater chance that your child will have diabetes than a child of a woman without diabetes.

WILL I HAVE A NORMAL BABY?

If your blood sugar is controlled before and during pregnancy, the risk is almost the same as for a pregnancy without diabetes. Taking folic acid as advised by your doctor will reduce the risk of congenital (inborn) abnormalities.

WHEN DO CONGENITAL ABNORMALITIES USUALLY OCCUR?

Usually they occur within the first 3 months of pregnancy. That is why it is very important for you to plan your pregnancy and to have your blood sugar controlled before and during pregnancy.

IS IT DIFFICULT TO CONTROL MY DIABETES DURING PREGNANCY?

By adhering to the following guidelines, you will maintain good control of your diabetes and have a safe pregnancy:

- Maintain regular home blood sugar monitoring.
- Take the diabetes treatment as prescribed.
- Follow the recommended diet and exercise.
- Follow up with your health care providers regularly.
- Do the requested blood tests at the laboratory.

WHY CANNOT I TAKE MY DIABETES TABLETS DURING PREGNANCY?

- The preferred treatment for diabetes during pregnancy are insulin and metformin tablets.
- Most other diabetes treatment tablets cross the placenta and might cause problem to the baby, and they may cause low blood sugar level for the new-born baby.



WHY DO I NEED MORE INSULIN DURING PREGNANCY?

- The placenta produces some hormones that reduce the function of insulin.
- If you started on insulin during your pregnancy, frequent blood tests should be performed and insulin dose will be adjusted accordingly.

WHAT ARE THE TARGET BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS DURING PREGNANCY?

It is recommended that all pregnant women with diabetes perform 4-6 blood tests daily at home. The targeted blood sugar levels are:

- **Fasting:** ≤ 90 milligram/deciliter (5 millimole/liter)
- **1 hour after food:** ≤ 130 milligram/deciliter (7.2 millimole/liter)
- **2 hours after food:** ≤ 120 milligram/deciliter (6.7 millimole/liter)

The fasting blood sugar indicates the degree of control maintained overnight, the after food test indicate how your body utilizes insulin after eating.

DOES LOW BLOOD SUGAR AFFECT MY BABY DURING PREGNANCY?

- Yes, low blood sugar (blood sugar level below 60 milligram/deciliter) might affect the baby. Therefore you should have 3 regular meals and 3 snacks daily as advised by your dietitian. This should be combined with frequent blood sugar monitoring.
- Avoiding low blood sugar is as important as preventing high blood sugar.

- You should always keep hard candy or juice with you in case you feel the symptoms of low blood sugar (excessive sweating, dizziness, hunger and sudden tiredness).
- Treat these symptoms quickly with the candy or juice and follow this with a sandwich or milk. If the symptoms are not relieved in 15 minutes, repeat the treatment.
- If you are unable to take food by mouth, seek medical assistance immediately.

WHAT ABOUT LATE COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES?

- If you have diabetes related complications, you need to start treating them before pregnancy, and you should have regular follow up with the specialized doctors.

- It is proved that with good control of diabetes there are fewer complications.



WHY DO I NEED TO DO FREQUENT BABY HEART MONITORING AFTER 23 WEEKS OF PREGNANCY?

Babies of mothers with diabetes have a higher incidence of fetal death; therefore, careful monitoring is indicated. It is recommended to do baby heart monitoring at 23 weeks of pregnancy, and then twice a week after that.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH BIG BABIES?

If the baby's weight is 4 kilograms and above, he/she is considered big. Big babies may cause problems during delivery.

WILL I HAVE A NORMAL DELIVERY?

- If your diabetes is well controlled, there is a good chance for a normal delivery; nevertheless, there is a risk that infant's shoulders become lodged in the mother's pelvis.
- However, the chance of Caesarean section is higher in patients with diabetes.

MAY I BREAST FEED MY BABY?

Yes, just as women without diabetes, but diabetes treatment tablets are not recommended while breastfeeding.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER PREGNANCY?

- Check your blood sugar frequently.
- Take your medication or insulin as prescribed by your doctor.
- Consult your dietitian.
- Start exercising (as recommended by your doctor).
- Keep your doctor's appointment.

For inquiries and more information:

Please do not hesitate to contact: _____

Telephone number: _____

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