



# *Gestational diabetes*

## What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a condition during pregnancy that causes high blood sugar. A mother must be able to produce enough insulin to cope with an increased demand during pregnancy and this is not always possible.

Gestational diabetes usually disappears after childbirth as the mother's insulin production returns to normal.

An increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes is associated with gestational diabetes.

## How is gestational diabetes diagnosed?

The screening test for gestational diabetes is the oral glucose tolerance test. The test consists of three blood samples which are taken during the course of two hours. You will be asked to drink a sugary drink. The target levels for those are:

- 0h (fasting) 5.3
- 1h (after drinking) 10.0
- 2h (after drinking) 8.6

Any results on or above these target levels will result in a diagnosis of gestational diabetes.

## TREATMENT

The main treatment of gestational diabetes is a balanced diet alongside regular exercise. Sometimes medication is required to treat gestational diabetes.



## Treatment objectives

- weight management
- normal blood sugar levels during pregnancy
- preventing baby from growing larger than usual and subsequently lowering baby's risk of becoming overweight and developing cardiovascular diseases in later life

## Nutrition therapy

A balanced diet and regular meals are important in the treatment of gestational diabetes. A balanced and healthy diet includes:

- Bread and other foods made of grain, and potato  
Choose wholegrain products with high fibre content (bread, rice, pasta).  
As potatoes can increase your blood glucose level quickly, you can swap them for wholegrain rice or pasta
- Eat 500g of fruit and vegetables every day: leafy and root vegetables, berries and fruit (berries and fruit may increase your blood glucose level)
- Consume 600-800ml of reduced fat milk products every day and use reduced fat cheese on bread
- Eat lean meat and fish 2–3 times per week
- Use margarine on bread, and vegetable oils or liquid margarine for cooking and baking
- Save foods with high fat and sugar content for special occasions
- Drink water when you feel thirsty
- 5-6 meals per day

## Exercise

Exercise lowers blood sugar and helps with weight management.

Depending on your fitness level, we recommend that you exercise for 20–30 minutes 3–5 times every week.

## Monitoring blood glucose levels at home in a 2 week cycle

- Week 1: Measure your blood sugar on four mornings after fasting overnight for 8–10 hours
- Week 2: Monitor your blood sugar levels seven times a day, on one day only
  - Measure blood sugar before and an hour after each meal
  - Fast 2,5 - 3 hours between meals
- Blood glucose levels should be monitored until the end of the pregnancy.
- Your nurse will teach you the correct measuring technique

### Self-monitoring blood sugar at home, target results:

On waking after fasting or before a meal, below 5.5

1 hour after finishing a meal, below 7.8

Please contact your neuvola nurse if:

- your blood sugar after fasting is above 5.5 **two times in one week**
- your levels after meals are **repeatedly** above 7.8.

You will get all the equipment you require from neuvola, free of charge. This includes the blood sugar measuring kit, needles and testing strips.

Should you require an insulin pen, please call and make an appointment at the Koskela self-treatment product distribution centre.

### KOSKELA DISTRIBUTION OF SELF-TREATMENT PRODUCTS

Käpyläntie 11, N house, b staircase, 3rd floor

tel. 09 310 55002

Telephone hours: Mon–Fri 10:00 to 14:00

## Monitoring gestational diabetes after childbirth

After childbirth, any follow-up care regarding gestational diabetes will be managed through your local health centre.

If you managed your gestational diabetes through diet and exercise only, please book an appointment with a nurse at your health care centre **one year after childbirth**. The nurse will refer you to the laboratory for blood tests.

If you required medication to manage your gestational diabetes, your neuvola nurse will refer you for a glucose tolerance test approx. 6–12 weeks after the birth.

We recommend that you continue eating a balanced, healthy diet and keep exercising after your pregnancy. Your weight should return as close to normal as possible after the birth of your baby. Breastfeeding can help you manage your weight and prevent type 2 diabetes.

For further information visit <http://www.hel.fi/raskausajandiabetes>

