

# Gestational Diabetes: After Pregnancy

What you can do to decrease risks for you and a future pregnancy



Things to do **EVERY DAY** for healthy women and babies:

**Exercise** – 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week

**Vitamin** – 400 micrograms (mcg) of Folic Acid per day

**Educate yourself** about medicines and chemicals that can cause birth defects

**Reproductive life planning** – set your personal goals for birth control and future children

**Yearly doctor visits** to discuss physical and mental wellness

**Diet** – Vegetables, fruits, and whole grains daily

**Avoid tobacco, drugs, and alcohol**

**Your partner, friends, and family** should be sources of support

Content from everywomancalifornia.org with permission from the Preconception Health Council of California.



## About gestational diabetes

- Gestational diabetes is high blood sugar (glucose) that is first diagnosed during pregnancy. Having gestational diabetes in your last pregnancy increases your risk of having gestational diabetes in another pregnancy and of having type 2 diabetes later in life. About 5% of women with gestational diabetes will get type 2 diabetes within 6 months after delivery and 60% will get type 2 diabetes within 10 years.
- Type 2 diabetes is caused when your body does not make enough insulin, or can't use the insulin it has, to help turn blood sugar (glucose) into energy. This causes high blood sugar. While you may not have any symptoms of high blood sugar, diabetes can lead to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney disease.
- If you had gestational diabetes, your health care provider will test your blood sugar during your postpartum checkup to see if you still have diabetes.

## How can you reduce your chances of getting type 2 diabetes?

- Lose weight, even a few pounds.
- Try to exercise every day for at least 30 minutes.
- Eat healthy foods. Increase fruits and vegetables and whole grain choices. See a dietitian for help to make the best food choices.
- Take a multivitamin every day and get as much rest as possible. Try to sleep when your baby does.

## What else can you do to improve your health?

- Ask your provider to test your blood sugar every 1-3 years to be sure you haven't gotten type 2 diabetes.
- See your provider regularly if you have type 2 diabetes to help reduce your risk of other health problems.
- Talk to your provider about birth control options. There are some birth control pills that are better than others when you have had gestational diabetes.
- Check your blood sugar before you get pregnant again to help you have a healthy pregnancy and baby. If your blood sugar is normal before you get pregnant, you can have a healthier pregnancy and baby.
- Breastfeed your baby. Breastfeeding can help you lose weight, can lower your blood sugar, and can lower your baby's risk for type 2 diabetes.
- Make sure your child is at a healthy weight and eats healthy foods to help reduce your child's risk of getting diabetes.

## Remember your ABCs:

folic  cid     reastfeeding     ontraception

## For more information, go to:

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: [acog.org/publications/faq/faq051.cfm](http://acog.org/publications/faq/faq051.cfm)

American Diabetes Association: [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org)

Every Woman California: [everywomancalifornia.org/content.cfm?categoriesID=4](http://everywomancalifornia.org/content.cfm?categoriesID=4)

March of Dimes: [marchofdimes.com/Pregnancy/complications\\_diabetes.html](http://marchofdimes.com/Pregnancy/complications_diabetes.html)