

Pregnancy Planning for Women With Diabetes

Maternity

Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

The majority of women with diabetes will give birth to healthy babies. However, having diabetes does increase the risk of serious complications for both mother and baby. Establishing good glucose control before you become pregnant will reduce the risks of miscarriage, abnormalities of your baby, and stillbirth.

You can reduce these risks by making sure you are in the best of health before you stop your contraception and try for a baby.

- If your BMI is over 27 kg/m² you can talk to a dietitian and get regular exercise to help you to reduce your weight.
- Improve your diabetes control by testing more frequently and getting advice from your diabetes specialist.
- Take folic acid 5mg/day when you are planning a pregnancy and continue until 12 completed weeks of pregnancy.
- If your BMI is >30 you should start taking Vitamin D 10mcg as soon as you are pregnant and continue until you finish breast feeding.
- Have your kidneys and eyes checked so that any problems can be treated before pregnancy.
- Get your GP to review your medications as not all medicines are safe to take while you are pregnant.

How we can support you to prepare

Your health care team will:

- Offer monthly HbA1c, a blood test to identify glucose control - below 48mmol/mol is ideal. If this is not a safe level for you, any reduction may reduce risks.
- Suggest pregnancy should be avoided at HbA1c above 86 mmol/mol.
- Arrange treatment for eyes or kidneys if required before stopping contraception, as pregnancy can increase problems and put extra stress on the body as a whole.

- Discuss recognising and treating hypoglycaemia. 'Hypos' or low glucose levels are more common in pregnancy and can be more difficult to recognise.
- Show you how and when to use a glucagon pen for severe hypos.
- Offer ketone testing strips for use when you're unwell or hyperglycaemic, as glucose levels can change more rapidly in pregnancy. Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is a severe complication of diabetes that can develop more rapidly and at lower glucose levels in pregnancy. Ketone testing allows early recognition and treatment.
- Support and advise you.

During pregnancy tight control of blood glucose levels is an important part of your care.

The recommended levels are:

- Below 5.3 mmol/l before breakfast (fasting)
- Below 7.8 mmol/l one hour after eating (post-prandial)

If you find it difficult to achieve these levels before pregnancy then it will be more difficult during pregnancy. Contacting your health care team before pregnancy will make this process much easier.

We can provide a new glucose meter to monitor your glucose and ketone levels if needed and refresh your memory on testing.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for:

- an informal chat.
- an update on self-managing your diabetes.
- how your diabetes may be affected by pregnancy.
- how your pregnancy may be affected by your diabetes.
- how your baby may be affected by your diabetes.

In summary

- Book a pre-conceptual diabetes review with your GP, Practice Nurse, or Diabetes Specialist Nurse.
- Start pregnancy in the best possible health.
- Commence folic acid 5mg daily as soon as you start trying to conceive.

You can contact the Diabetes Specialist Midwife for support and information at any time.

It is important that you contact us as soon as you have had a positive pregnancy test so that we can organise an early scan to confirm your pregnancy.

Further information is available at:

www.nhs.uk

www.diabetes.org.uk

(search for Diabetes in Pregnancy)

Useful Contact Details

Diabetes Team Lancaster: 01524 518575

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Other formats

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, then please contact : 01539 795497.

Travelling to our hospitals

For the best way to plan your journey visit our website:
<http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): 01539 795497.

Useful Contact Details

NHS 111 (for 24 hour urgent health advice): telephone 111

Your Information

If you would like to know how we use, share, disclose and secure your information and your rights of access to the information we hold about you, visit the Trust's website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01539 795497.

Evidence

Details of the evidence used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: Patient Information Officer at 01524 512476.

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact PALS on 01539 795497.

UHMBT is a no smoking Trust. Smoking is not permitted on any of the hospital sites. You can contact the NHS North Lancashire Stop Smoking services on the number below:

NHS Quit Squad - **0800 328 6297**

If you live in Cumbria, please call **0300 013 3000** to find a local pharmacy who are offers 1-2-1 support and nicotine replacement therapy.

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