

Planning for Pregnancy WOMEN WITH DIABETES

Background

Women with diabetes that is preexisting including pre-diabetes, Type 1 or 2 diabetes should obtain pre-pregnancy counseling. Controlling blood glucose levels is very important since it can help to decrease the risk for miscarriage and birth defects associated with diabetes. Women must monitor their own blood glucose levels. Under the guidance of a health care provider, they can change the amount of insulin and modify their diets and activity to keep their blood glucose levels in the normal range. Studies have shown that women who maintain normal blood glucose levels before and throughout pregnancy have the best chance of having a healthy child.

How Diabetes Affects Pregnancy

Diabetes may make it more difficult to become pregnant and to keep the pregnancy. Careful control of blood glucose levels lowers the risk of birth defects, miscarriage, and stillbirth. Diabetes may affect the health of both the woman and her infant. Women may experience increased blood pressure during pregnancy, infections, extra fluid around the baby, and babies that have problems with growth (too big or too small) that may lead to a difficult delivery or cesarean delivery. Diabetes puts women at a higher risk for developing diabetic ketoacidosis during pregnancy and for worsening of diabetic eye and kidney problems. Infants may have difficulty controlling their blood glucose and electrolyte levels after birth, be born prematurely, have an increased risk for prolonged jaundice, have difficulty breathing after birth and have an increased chance of developing diabetes.

How Pregnancy Affects Diabetes

Pregnancy makes controlling blood glucose difficult. Insulin needs usually double or triple during pregnancy. Normal changes in pregnancy can affect a woman's blood glucose. Nausea, vomiting, and infections can also affect a woman's blood glucose control. Women with diabetes should talk with their health care provider about maintaining blood glucose levels. Diabetic pregnancies are high risk. It is important to meet with an experienced team who provide care for women with diabetes during pregnancy.

What You Can Do

- 1) *Talk to your health care provider if you are thinking about becoming pregnant.*
- 2) *Before you become pregnant learn how to monitor and control your diabetes.*
- 3) *Learn more about monitoring and controlling your diabetes by talking with an experienced team who provide care for women with diabetes during pregnancy.*
- 4) *Make sure you are eating properly and getting enough exercise.*
- 5) *Have your health care provider review medications for safety during conception and pre-pregnancy. Many medications used to treat diabetes and diabetes related conditions need to be stopped before or shortly after conception.*

Developed by the WAPC Preconception and Prenatal Care Committee, revised 4/15

Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care

211 S. Paterson Street, Suite 250

Madison, WI 53703

Phone: 608-285-5858; Fax: 608-285-5004; Email: wapc@perinatalweb.org

This information is available on the WAPC Web site at www.perinatalweb.org.

