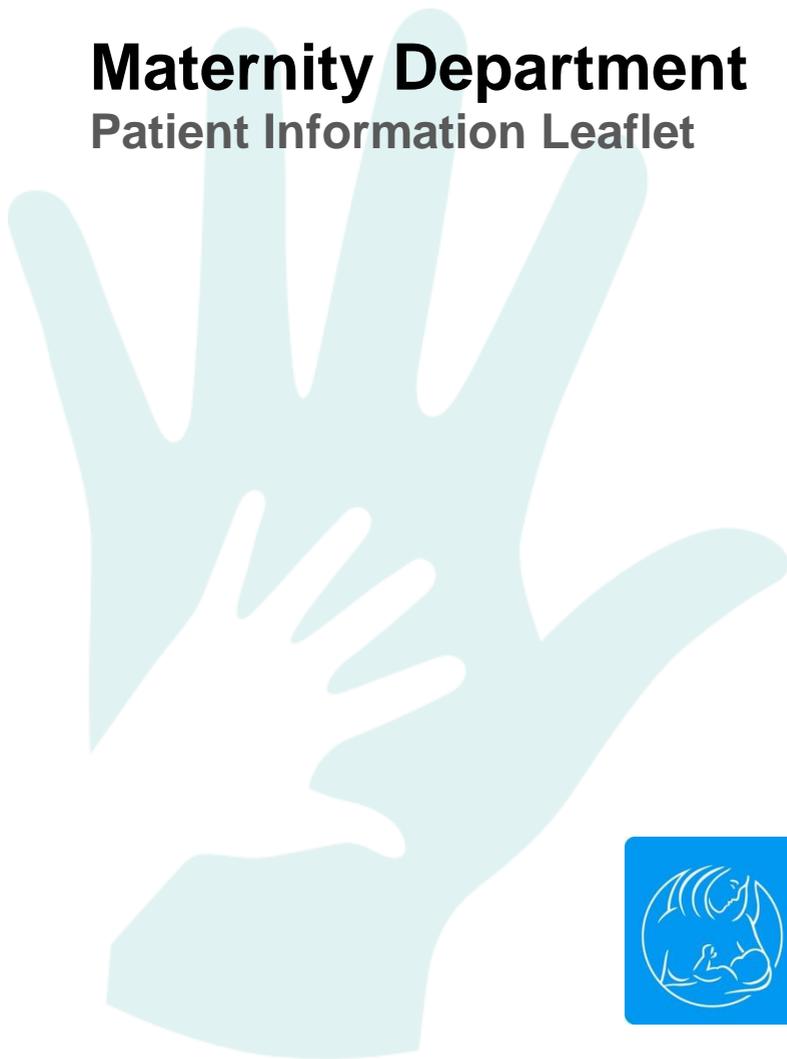


Gestational diabetes

Maternity Department Patient Information Leaflet



Introduction

This leaflet is for women who have gestational diabetes. It contains information on what the condition is, how it is treated and what will happen during labour and after your baby is born.

What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a temporary form of diabetes that begins in pregnancy and usually goes away after your baby is born.

More rarely, diabetes may have been present for some time but it is first detected when you are pregnant.

Diabetes is a condition where there is too much glucose (sugar) in the blood. Normally, the amount of glucose in the blood is controlled by a hormone called insulin. However, during pregnancy, some women develop higher than normal levels of glucose in their blood, which insulin cannot bring under control.

Gestational diabetes usually develops in the third trimester (after 28 weeks).

The two other main types of diabetes are:

- Type 1 diabetes – when the body produces no insulin. This type of diabetes usually appears in people under the age of 40, often in childhood.
- Type 2 diabetes – when the body does not produce enough insulin and/or the body's cells do not react to insulin (insulin resistance). It usually occurs later in adult life.

How is gestational diabetes treated?

If you have gestational diabetes, you will be referred to a joint antenatal and diabetes clinic. At this clinic, we will give you information about monitoring and controlling your blood glucose levels.

Sometimes changing your diet and gentle exercise will be enough to control your gestational diabetes. We will refer you to a dietitian who will advise you about this. If your blood glucose levels cannot be controlled by diet and exercise, you may need tablets, insulin injections or both. We will discuss this with you.

How can gestational diabetes affect my baby and me?

With the right treatment and good control of your blood glucose levels, most women do not have problems.

However, having gestational diabetes can increase the risk of experiencing problems during pregnancy. It can also lead to birth difficulties which may need the expertise of the hospital team. Some of the risks include premature birth, the need for labour to be induced and a caesarean section.

Gestational diabetes can lead to your baby growing too big or small, and they may have low blood glucose levels after birth.

You will be at risk of developing gestational diabetes in future pregnancies and type 2 diabetes in later life.

What does this mean for my pregnancy and the delivery of my baby?

- You will be offered more frequent antenatal appointments and scans so that you and your unborn baby can be closely monitored.
- You may also be offered appointments to see the diabetes specialist nurses in the Diabetes Centre.
- You will be taught how to monitor your blood glucose levels and provided with a blood glucose meter to use during your pregnancy.
- You will be given a special set of notes (orange notes) to keep a record of your blood glucose levels. These notes also contain advice and contact numbers for you.
- If you do not go into labour on your own, you will be offered an induction of labour around your due date. This will depend on several factors, for example, your health and the health of your baby and how well your blood glucose levels are controlled.

What do I need to bring into hospital?

As you have gestational diabetes, when you come in to have your baby or if you come to see the midwife assessment triage team, please make sure you bring:

- Your green and orange hand-held notes
- Your blood glucose meter
- Any medication you have been prescribed

Always bring your green and orange notes when you come for hospital appointments, to see the triage team or when you come into hospital to have your baby.

What will happen during labour?

Once you are in labour, the midwives looking after you will monitor your blood glucose levels hourly. This is because it is very important for your baby that you have stable blood glucose levels.

If you were treated with insulin during your pregnancy, we will give you insulin through a cannula (drip) in the back of your hand. We may also suggest this if your blood glucose levels become high during labour, even if you were not treated with insulin during your pregnancy.

If you are having a planned caesarean section, you will need to come to hospital the evening before. We will start monitoring your blood glucose levels from 6am on the morning of your caesarean section. If you were treated with insulin during your pregnancy, we will start giving you insulin at this time.

What will happen after my baby is born?

After your baby is born, we will check your blood glucose levels a few times to see if they have returned to normal. When the levels are normal, you will be able to stop any medication you were taking for diabetes.

You will need to stay in hospital for at least 24 hours so your baby's blood glucose levels can also be monitored several times. It is very important for us to check that your baby blood glucose levels are stable.

Will the diabetes go away after giving birth?

Usually blood glucose levels return to normal after the birth of a baby. In this case, you will be able to stop any treatment that you were taking straight away.

We will ask you to come for a blood test about six weeks after your baby has been born, to check that the diabetes has gone. This will be a fasting blood test. We will give you information about this test and an appointment for the antenatal and diabetes clinic to obtain the results.

What will happen if I have another baby?

If you have had gestational diabetes, it is more likely that you will develop it again in a future pregnancy. Therefore, if you become pregnant again, you will be tested much earlier in your pregnancy for gestational diabetes.

Will I develop diabetes in later life?

If you have had gestational diabetes, you are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes in later life. Up to 50 per cent of women diagnosed with gestational diabetes develop type 2 diabetes within five years of having their baby.

We will give you advice about diet and exercise as research suggests that a healthy diet and exercise can help prevent type 2 diabetes from developing.

It is understandable that you will feel tired looking after your new baby. However, moderate exercise can make you feel better and help to get you back into shape. There are activities that you can do with your baby. Speak to your midwife or health visitor for information about these.

Reference

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2015). *Diabetes in pregnancy: management of diabetes and its complications from preconception to the postnatal period*. NICE guidelines NG3. NICE: London. Available from:

<<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng3>>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Antenatal clinic on 01384 244312 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or your community midwife

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number:
01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/maternity/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔