

# Gestational Diabetes and your Pregnancy

## Information Leaflet



**Kent and Sussex Weald Diabetes Centre**  
Level 2, Abbey Court  
7-15 St Johns Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
TN4 9TE  
01892 633943

**Diabetes Centre**  
Ground Floor  
Yellow Zone  
Maidstone Hospital  
01622 224406

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## What are the next steps following group education?

It can be overwhelming receiving the news that you have gestational diabetes. People react to the news in a variety of ways (upset, angry, scared and experiencing feelings like 'it's my fault'). We hope that we have been able to reassure you.

We understand that you have had a lot to take in so below are some reminders of the key points. We also have information videos made by the Diabetes Team covering all these key points

<https://www.mtw.nhs.uk/pregnancies-that-require-additional-care/>

## What do I need to do now?

1. Arrange to have your blood test (form provided) as soon as possible. This blood test can be taken by any of the following practitioner services:
    - Phlebotomy
    - GP Practice
    - Community Midwife
  2. Start testing your blood glucose levels four times a day (before breakfast and one hour after meals).  
**Remember the Blood Glucose Targets are:**  
Before breakfast (fasting): less than 5.3mmol/l  
One hour after meals: less than 7.8mmol/l
  3. Please contact your GP practice 2-3 working days after the group session to collect further supplies for monitoring (strips, lancets and sharps bin).
  4. Email your blood glucose levels to us weekly:
    - Maidstone [mtw-tr.pcdcm Maidstone@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.pcdcm Maidstone@nhs.net) on a Sunday
    - Abbey Court [mtw-tr.diabetes-pem@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.diabetes-pem@nhs.net) on a Tuesday
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When you email us, please tell us if you use another name and always use your personal code so that we can correctly identify you. Your personal code is your initials and date of birth; for an example JA010698.

When sending your results, please include the week of your pregnancy and any treatment you are taking

Any concerns with your blood glucose levels or treatment, please call or email us and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

5. Start to make changes to your diet and activity levels. Please do not over restrict your diet. We strongly advise you not to go 'carb-free.' We recommend Diabetes UK for evidence based dietary information. [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

### What else should happen?

- You should continue to liaise regularly with your Community Midwife
  - You will be invited to attend a 36 week appointment with an obstetrician and an ultrasound scan appointment.
  - Following your 36 week scan, you can discuss your birth place choices with your midwife or your obstetrician at the hospital.
  - If you do begin diabetes treatment (metformin or insulin) then you will be regularly monitored. You will be invited to attend the joint Diabetes Antenatal Clinic held every fortnight on a Tuesday.
  - The Colostrum Collection sheet that you have been given may be helpful if you are considering collecting your colostrum in preparation for your baby's birth.
  - You can start colostrum collection from 36 weeks and we can provide you with leaflets on this:
    - **A Practical Guide to Antenatal Colostrum Collection**
    - **Antenatal Colostrum Collection**
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- This video, by our Infant Feeding Team, is very useful in showing those who are pregnant how to express colostrum:

[Colostrum Collection in Pregnancy: When to start and how to do it - YouTube](#)

**Please remember we are here to help and support you throughout your pregnancy.**

1. For any **non-urgent midwifery-related concerns**, please contact the Diabetes Midwives via the following emails:  
[mtw-tr.diabetesspecialistmidwives@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.diabetesspecialistmidwives@nhs.net)

Alternatively your community midwife can be contacted via the maternity liaison office.

2. For any **diabetes-related concerns**, please contact the Diabetes Teams (Monday – Friday 9-5) at either.

Maidstone Hospital  
Email:

☎ 01622 224406

[mtw-tr.pcdcm Maidstone@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.pcdcm Maidstone@nhs.net)

Abbey Court  
Email:

☎ 01892 633943

[mtw-tr.diabetes-pem@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.diabetes-pem@nhs.net)

3. For any urgent concerns, please contact:  
Maternity Triage (24/7) ☎ 01892 633500

## **Blood Glucose Monitoring**

### **Your blood glucose targets:**

- Before breakfast (fasting): less than 5.3mmol/l
- One hour after meals: less than 7.8mmol/l

### **How to get an accurate test result:**

1. Wash your hands in warm water with soap every time to improve the accuracy of the test. Do not use antibacterial gels or wipes.
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2. Prepare the lancet device with a new lancet, a tissue for your finger and the strip you are going to use.
  3. Put the strip into the meter with the 'piano key' part of the strip facing uppermost and wait for the meter to be ready (it will show a picture of a strip and a drop of blood)
  4. Prick the side of the tip of your finger. **Gently** squeeze the blood from the palm of your hand to the tip of your finger and hold the strip tip up to the blood drop.
  5. Dip the strip into the blood and it will soak the blood up like blotting paper. Do not smear the blood onto the strip. Remove your finger from the test strip when the meter beeps.
  6. Once the result has transferred to your phone you need to tag the result.
  7. You can tag the result by tapping on the dot, this brings up a box with the reading, date, time and an option to put pre-breakfast, post-breakfast, post-lunch or post-dinner, please choose the correct tag. Add a note... tap on this to add food choices or information about abnormal results.

### **Quality Control checking your meter:**

1. Please check the control solution is in date.
  2. Shake the control solution bottle.
  3. Wipe the bottle tip clean using a clean tissue/paper towel. Discard the first drop of control solution. Put a second drop onto a clean surface. Bring the tip of the strip to the control solution.
  4. The result will appear on the display. Compare the result of your control solution result to the range printed on your pot of test strips. Your result should fall within this range. If out of range on two occasions, discard current strips and start a new pot.
  5. A control check needs to be done when you open a new pot of test strips and if you feel the machine may be faulty.
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6. Once the control solution has been opened it is valid for 3 months.
  7. Any further supplies of control solution can be obtained free of charge from the meter company.

### **How do I get equipment for blood glucose monitoring?**

- Further supplies of strips, lancets and sharps bins should be requested on prescription from your GP surgery.
- The letter given to you at the group needs to be handed in to your GP so they know what to prescribe.

### **Sharps disposal:**

- Dispose of all lancets and needles into the sharps bin provided by your GP.
- Your diabetes midwives will provide information on how to arrange for the council to pick up the bin when it is full or no longer needed.

### **Timings of blood glucose tests:**

- Blood glucose tests need to be done before breakfast/fasting; one hour after breakfast, lunch and evening meal.
- You may need to do more frequent tests later in the pregnancy or if you start diabetes treatment e.g. before all meals and before bed.

### **Blood glucose results:**

- Please send your blood glucose results from your mobile telephone, or take a photograph of your results and email to the relevant diabetes centre.
  - If you're unable to do this, please telephone the relevant diabetes centre.
  - If you forget to send us your results, please email as soon as you do remember.
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## Snack ideas

We recommend that you spread your carbohydrate intake over regularly timed meals and also to eat between meal and bedtime snacks.

The following food portions contain 10-15g carbohydrate so they are ideal for a snack between meals and at bedtime.

1 whole fruit e.g. apple, orange, pear, nectarine, small banana
2 small fruits e.g. apricots, clementine's, kiwi fruit, plums
10-15 grapes
½ cereal bowl of berries
2 dates, prunes, dried apricots
Small child's snack box of raisins (about 1 tablespoon)
Individual carton of low calorie yogurt (less than 100 calories)
200g natural low fat Greek yogurt
½ pint glass of semi-skimmed milk
Small bag popcorn (not sweet) or baked crisps
1 small thin slice granary or rye bread with olive spread
3 long breadsticks and low fat cream cheese (try the flavoured ones)
2 plain oatcakes/Rice cakes/crispbread with hummus, peanut butter, Marmite, low fat cheese spread, mashed avocado
2 plain biscuits e.g. Rich Tea, malted milk, ginger nut, Nice
1 Digestive or oat biscuit
Low calorie cereal bar (less than 100 calories)

To find your own snacks, check the carbohydrate value on food labels – look for the carbohydrate in the portion you are going to eat and aim for 10-15g unless advised otherwise.

Try to keep saturated fat, salt and sugar to a minimum.

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## If you find you are still hungry?

If you have eaten your carbohydrate snack and are still hungry, try some of these low carbohydrate snacks to fill you up.

Unsalted nuts and seeds
Avocado
Cucumber/celery/carrot sticks with low fat soft cheese, salsa or hummus
Green salad – variety of salad leaves, cucumber, green pepper, spring onion with lemon juice and olive oil
Cherry tomatoes, radishes
Olives, gherkins, pickled onions
Hard boiled eggs
Tinned or cooked fish e.g. smoked mackerel, tinned tuna or sardines. <b>NB.</b> Limit oily fish to no more than 2 x 140g (cooked weight) portions/week. Limit tinned tuna to no more than 4 x 140g cans per week
Cooked meats e.g. cold chicken pieces, lean ham.
Sugar-free jelly
Low calorie hot chocolate drinks (40 calories per cup)

Depending on your blood glucose levels, the dietitian may contact you to provide specific advice for your situation.

If you are concerned about your diet, please ask for individual advice from a Diabetes Specialist Dietitian.

## Birth and afterwards

### Coming to hospital

Please bring with you:

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- Your blood glucose meter, supplies of test strips and medications and blood glucose record
  - Your colostrum that you have collected; freezer to freezer

## Labour

- Your midwife will guide you on blood glucose testing as per your birth plan and hospital guidelines.

## Eating and drinking in labour

Most people feel hungry and thirsty during the **early stages** of labour when it is safe to eat and drink.

Eating small snacks and/or sipping liquids every 1-2 hours may help you feel more comfortable and give you energy for the labour ahead of you.

If your gestational diabetes is **managed by diet** only, then your blood glucose levels will not be monitored routinely.

If you are on insulin or metformin, then your blood glucose levels will be checked hourly and you will be guided by your midwife.

Snacks for early labour:

- A small pot of yogurt
- Small banana, handful of grapes
- Plain biscuits e.g. Rich Tea, ginger nuts, oatcakes
- Bread or toast e.g. sandwich
- Dried fruit
- Oat/cereal snack bar
- Nuts

If you are unable to eat any solid food, sipping sweet fluids may be helpful such as:

- Lucozade Sport or other isotonic drinks
  - Fruit juice diluted with water
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- Fruit squash (ordinary, not sugar-free) or chew on jelly sweets e.g. jelly babies, wine gums, Haribos

**Once in active** labour your midwife will guide you. You will be advised when you should stop eating and drinking.

To keep hydrated throughout labour, continue to sip on water or other clear, sugar-free fluids.

### What to expect once baby is born?

You will be encouraged to feed your baby within the first hour after birth.

Your baby will have their blood glucose checked regularly until stable (a minimum of two tests).

Before leaving hospital, we recommend that you test your own blood glucose levels two hours after any two separate meals. This is best done with your own blood glucose monitoring kit.

- If blood glucose readings are both less than 11.0mmol/l you can stop testing and go home.
- If you have at least one reading at 11.0mmol/l or above, continue testing and contact our Diabetes Specialist Nurse by phone in working office hours at either Abbey Court or Maidstone Hospital. (telephone numbers now on front page)

It is recommended that:

1. You have either a six week fasting glucose blood test **or** a 13 week non-fasting HbA1c blood test at your GP practice. These tests are to check if the diabetes has resolved
  2. If these blood glucose checks are within normal range then the GP practice should then check once a year that your risk of developing diabetes has not increased.
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3. As you will no longer be under midwifery care it is advised that you ensure these checks are done and you should book these with your GP surgery.

To reduce the chance of you developing Type 2 diabetes we would encourage you to continue with healthy eating, keeping active and maintaining a healthy weight.

If you become pregnant again, please tell your midwife that you previously had gestational diabetes and the midwife will arrange an early screening test (Glucose Tolerance Test).

**Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have.**

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## Further information and advice can be obtained from:


**Diabetes UK Website:**

[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

**The GP practice** may provide you with access exercise on prescription.

**Your local Council** may provide local Health Walks or Exercise Groups

**NHS 111**

 111

**NHS Choices online**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.**

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

**Telephone:**  01622 224960 or  01892 632953

**Email:** [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk) or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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