



Will Diabetes Hurt My Baby?

Having diabetes will not make your baby have diabetes after it is born. We want to give you some facts about the dangers of high blood sugars. These facts are not meant to frighten you. With good blood sugar control, these things don't happen often. If you follow the advice of your health care team and keep your blood sugars normal until the baby is born, you are likely to do very well and have a healthy baby. If your blood sugars stay too high, some serious problems can happen:

- **Birth Defects.** There is up to a 20% chance of a major birth defect with elevated blood sugars early in the pregnancy.
- **IUGR.** Intrauterine growth restriction is a term for a baby who is smaller than normal during pregnancy. The baby is not growing inside the uterus at the normal rate.
- **Large birth size.** Your body will only use what sugar it needs. The extra sugar in your blood goes to your baby. The baby makes extra insulin and stores the sugar as fat on its body. This makes the baby too large and may affect the baby's lungs.
- **Low blood sugar in the baby after birth.** If your blood sugar is too high, the baby's body gets used to making extra insulin. Your baby keeps making insulin after it is born, but it is not getting the sugar from you anymore. The extra insulin can make your baby's blood sugar very low. This is called *hypoglycemia* and it is very serious. Your baby's blood sugar will be checked often after it is born and will be given breast milk or formula to keep the blood sugar normal. These babies may need to go to special nurseries to be watched very closely and get sugar through a needle in their vein.
- **Cardiomyopathy.** An abnormality in the baby's heart muscle, which does not allow the heart to pump properly.
- **Jaundice.** This is a build-up of a body chemical called bilirubin. A certain amount is normal, but can be a big problem in the baby if the mother had high blood sugars. Sometimes these babies need to be put under special lights to help their bodies break down the extra bilirubin.
- **Stillbirth.** When the blood sugars are too high, there is less oxygen for the baby, which can lead to death of the baby inside the womb.

How can diabetes affect me?

- **Difficult labor and cesarean delivery.** Most women with diabetes deliver healthy babies. If the blood sugars stay normal during pregnancy and the baby is a normal size, most women can have a regular vaginal delivery. Large babies are more difficult to deliver. Sometimes injuries can happen to both mom and baby. The baby's arm or shoulder could be broken during delivery. Nerve damage to the face and arms can also happen. Some women will need the baby delivered by surgery, called a cesarean section (c-section).
- **More infections.** Women with diabetes out of control get more infections. Vaginal, bladder, and kidney infections happen most often.
- **Preeclampsia or gestational hypertension.** Women with diabetes are more likely to have PIH during pregnancy. The blood pressure becomes too high and can make your feet, ankles, hands, face and eyes swollen. This is unhealthy for both you and your baby! Call your doctor as soon as possible.
- **Greater risks for diabetes after pregnancy.** Sometimes, diabetes does not go away after pregnancy. A large number of women with gestational diabetes will develop diabetes later in life. This happens more often in women who are overweight.
- **You are the most important person on the team and we need you to comply with all the instructions.**

I have been given a copy of this document. I have read it and all my questions have been answered.

NAME _____ DATE _____

