

# Pre-Existing Diabetes and Pregnancy

## Potential Effects of Uncontrolled Diabetes Before and During Pregnancy

If you have diabetes and want to get pregnant, it is important for you to get and keep your blood sugar in control (meaning your Hemoglobin A1c level is within the limits set by your health care provider). Working to keep your blood sugar in control before and during pregnancy increases your chances of having a healthy baby and reduces the chances that you will have other problems. Uncontrolled diabetes increases the chances for the following problems you and your baby:

### For You

- Worsening of any existing eye, kidney, heart, or nerve problems caused by diabetes
- Labor may start too early (preterm labor)
- Bladder and other infections
- Gum disease
- Injury from delivering big baby
- Cesarean section
- High blood pressure
- Preeclampsia (high blood pressure + protein in urine)

For more information, visit:

- Gestational diabetes factsheet: [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/gestationalDiabetes.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/gestationalDiabetes.pdf)
- Diabetes and Pregnancy web pages: [www.cdc.gov/Features/DiabetesAndPregnancy/](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/DiabetesAndPregnancy/)

### For Your Baby

- Birth defects
  - Some heart defects
  - Some major birth defects of the brain and spinal cord
- Stillbirth or miscarriage
- Born very big (more than 9 pounds); if a big baby is delivered vaginally, it may have:
  - Injury to nerves in shoulder
  - Broken collarbone
- Low blood sugar after birth
- Yellow skin and eyes (jaundice)
- Obesity later in life

## Remember

Working to control your blood sugar can help prevent these problems.

If you have diabetes,

- Plan your pregnancy, if possible, and get your body ready before you get pregnant
- Eat healthy foods and stay active
- Take your medicines
- Monitor your blood sugar often
- Control and treat blood sugar right away
- Follow up with the doctor regularly

If you've never had a diabetes test and want to learn more about the symptoms, please visit [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/consumer/learn.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/consumer/learn.htm). If you think you might be at risk, talk to your doctor.



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention