

Pregnancy Over, Diabetes Over?

Follow-up Care After Gestational Diabetes



Dear Mom with gestational diabetes,

following the birth of your child, a new and exciting chapter begins in your life. During this time, it is essential to prioritize not only your baby's wellbeing but also your own health. Even if your blood sugar levels normalize after childbirth, the risk of future metabolic disorders, such as Type 2 diabetes, remains elevated. Therefore, it is important to monitor your blood sugar levels closely after childbirth. Here, you'll learn why follow-up care is essential and receive guidance on what you can do to maintain your health.

+ Why is follow-up care important?

Gestational diabetes may persist beyond childbirth. Postpartum, there is an increased risk for:

- **Prediabetes or type 2 diabetes:** Nearly 40% of women experience elevated blood sugar levels within the first 6-12 weeks after birth. One in two women develops diabetes within 10 years, with the highest risk occurring within the first 3-6 years.
- **Cardiovascular diseases:** Your risk doubles.
- **Subsequent pregnancies:** gestational diabetes recurs in 35-50% of cases.

What does follow-up care involve?

According to medical guidelines, follow-up care involves the following steps:

- 1. 6-12 weeks after childbirth:** A one-time check-up using an oral glucose tolerance test (oGTT).
- 2. Annual check-ups:** Monitoring fasting glucose and HbA_{1c} levels.
- 3. Additional oGTT:** Every 2 years, if indicated.

Thresholds		No diabetes	Pre-diabetes	Diabetes
oGTT mg/dl (mmol/l)	Fasting glucose	< 100 (< 5,6)	100–125 (5,6–6,9)	≥ 126 (≥ 7,0)
	2-hour glucose	< 140 (< 7,8)	140–199 (7,8–11,0)	≥ 200 (≥ 11,1)
HbA _{1c} % (mmol/mol)		< 5,7 (< 39)	5,7–6,4 (39–47)	≥ 6,5 (≥ 48)

The follow-up care is carried out by the facility or practice that managed your gestational diabetes. Consult your healthcare provider about the follow-up examination and schedule an appointment in advance.

What should you consider for a subsequent pregnancy?

- **During pregnancy planning:** Regularly monitor your blood sugar levels.
- **At your first visit in the first trimester:** Measuring fasting blood glucose and HbA_{1c} levels.



What can you do to reduce the risk of diabetes?

**The good news is:
You can actively lower
your diabetes risk!**

- **Healthy diet and exercise:** Maintaining an active lifestyle significantly helps.
- **Avoid smoking and alcohol:** This is beneficial for both you and your child.
- **Maintain a healthy body weight:** For those who are overweight, long-term weight loss can reduce the risk of diabetes.
- **Breastfeeding:** Exclusively for at least 3 months, ideally 4-6 months.

Midwives, diabetes advisors, and nutritionists can support you. Also, seek support from your family – together, you can achieve this!



Don't fear follow-up care

It is completely normal to feel nervous about follow-up examinations or to fear a diabetes diagnosis. However, being aware of your elevated risk provides you the opportunity to act early. This way, you can seek targeted support and advice and actively contribute to your health.

Your health matters

Your health after birth is just as important as it is during pregnancy. Utilize all available assistance and resources and stay active in your follow-up care. Schedule an appointment today and seek support from experts and your family!

Stay mindful and healthy!

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