

Diabetes, pregnancy and family planning (1 of 1)

Every year many women with diabetes become pregnant and go on to have a healthy baby.

It is important, though, that all pregnancies in women with diabetes are planned. This means ensuring that your diabetes is under good control and you are on the right medication when you become pregnant, and that you have had a recent assessment for any potential diabetes problems.

Unplanned pregnancies are much more likely to lead to problems with the baby's development and sometimes these can lead to loss of the baby early or late in the pregnancy. Unplanned pregnancy can also cause problems with the mother's health, particularly if there are already diabetes-related problems with the eyes, kidneys and high blood pressure.

If you are not planning to become pregnant it is important that you use contraception and your GP surgery can discuss the available options.

If you wish to become pregnant you should discuss this with your doctor who will arrange an assessment of your diabetes and a hospital appointment with the Diabetes Team.

- You should stop smoking and either stop or minimise the amount of alcohol you are drinking.
- You should take a supplement of 5mg a day of folic acid tablets. Your doctor will prescribe this for you. All women are recommended to take folic acid before becoming pregnant in order to reduce the risks of having a baby with spina bifida (a serious problem with the spine and brain). The recommended dose is higher for women with diabetes.

Depending on what treatment you are taking, some changes may need to be made to your insulin and tablets before you become pregnant. If you are taking tablets for cholesterol or blood pressure, these will almost certainly need to be changed or stopped.

If your diabetes is not well controlled you will be given lots of support to improve it.

The Diabetes Team will then discuss with you when would be the right time for you to stop contraception.

Once you become pregnant you should let your GP or the hospital Diabetes Team know straight away. They will then arrange an antenatal appointment for you.

Remember: The sooner you discuss family planning with your doctor or nurse, the better! Plan ahead.

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If you need this information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 374 208 email: palservice@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital

We ask for information about you so that you can receive proper care and treatment. This information remains confidential and is stored securely by the Trust in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Author: M S mith
 Date written: March 2006
 Approved: March 2006
 Review date: March 2009
 Code: CSNew98