

## ***What is gestational diabetes? (1 of 1)***

### What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is a type of diabetes that arises during pregnancy. It usually develops between 24 and 36 weeks because the body cannot produce enough insulin to meet the extra needs of pregnancy. Occasionally GDM is found earlier in pregnancy – if it is, it is likely that diabetes was present prior to you becoming pregnant.

### Why is it important?

The main reason to recognise and treat GDM is to try to reduce the chance of having a larger than normal baby, which can cause problems at the time of delivery.

### How is it treated?

Often, blood glucose levels can be controlled by diet alone. 10 to 30 per cent of women with GDM require insulin for control.

### Will it go away after delivery?

Usually it does. To make sure your blood glucose levels have returned to normal, we will arrange a fasting sugar test six weeks after your baby is born. If you took insulin injections during your pregnancy, you may be able to stop them after your baby is born.

Women with GDM have a 30-50 per cent risk of developing Type 2 diabetes during their lifetime (compared to a 10 per cent risk in the general population). Women from ethnic groups that have a high rate of Type 2 diabetes (African, African-Caribbean and Asian) are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes if they have had GDM.

### Will I get GDM again?

Possibly. You are more likely to have GDM again if you've had it in previous pregnancies; but, if you are overweight and lose weight, you may cut your risk of having GDM again.

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](mailto: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: J Lawrence  
Date written: July 2006  
Approved: August 2006  
Review date: August 2009  
Version: 1.0  
Code: CSNew123

**Diabetes & Endocrinology**  
**Tel.: 01722 336262 ext. 2176**