



Planning to get pregnant

If you want to start a family, discuss your decision with your doctor and your diabetes care team right away. Also, you may wish to find an obstetrician who is familiar with the special needs of women with diabetes.

Women with diabetes who are thinking about pregnancy are asked to maintain excellent blood sugar levels before conception. Women who maintain blood sugar in range before conception and during the first 3 months of pregnancy have fewer risks of birth defects when compared with women who were not in range.



Aim for near-normal glucose levels

The most essential thing you must do is to get your blood sugar levels as close to normal as possible — ideally for 3 months before you become pregnant. You'll need to monitor your blood sugar often.

Blood sugar goals

Test timing	Blood glucose target range
Before meals	70-100 mg/dl
1 hour after meals	Under 140 mg/dl
2 hours after meals	Under 120 mg/dl

Your doctor will order A1c tests every month or two until your blood glucose levels are stable.





Is your body ready?

Your doctor will conduct a thorough exam to see what effects your diabetes has had on your body up to now. He or she also will check your body's readiness to take on the demands of pregnancy. Pregnancy can affect some of the complications of diabetes:

- **Retinopathy** (damage to the blood vessels in the eye) may develop or worsen during pregnancy. Get a dilated eye exam before you become pregnant, and plan on follow-up exams with your eye doctor during your pregnancy.
- People with diabetes also may have **high blood pressure**. Women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should not take certain blood pressure medications, such as diuretics, ACE inhibitors, or beta-blockers.
- Pregnancy can make **kidney disease** worse. Your doctor will order tests to check on your kidney functioning. This is important both for you and the baby, since kidneys that are poorly functioning can affect the baby's growth and development. Mild kidney disease that gets worse during pregnancy may get better after birth. Severe kidney disease that gets worse during pregnancy may be permanent.
- **Nerve damage in your limbs**, called peripheral neuropathy (such as carpal tunnel syndrome), can get worse during pregnancy.
- **Nerve damage to the internal organs**, called autonomic neuropathy, can complicate the management of diabetes during pregnancy. This damage is sometimes seen in the stomach, which blocks the digestion of food and requires careful treatment before pregnancy. This damage may cause problems urinating or a sudden drop in blood pressure when you get up quickly.
- **Cardiovascular disease** can be dangerous if not treated. Your doctor will want to test your ability to exercise to be sure that your heart can handle the demands of pregnancy.

Your doctor can let you know when you can stop birth control and go ahead with trying to become pregnant. If you haven't been able to reach the target range, your doctor will discuss the risks of getting pregnant with high glucose levels.