

**Patient  
Information**

# Planning a family when you have diabetes

## Introduction

This leaflet gives advice for patients with diabetes who are planning a family.

## Planning or thinking about pregnancy

It is essential to achieve good blood glucose control before pregnancy to help reduce any risk of complications for both you and your unborn baby. It is important to let the diabetes team know that you are thinking about pregnancy before you stop using contraception. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet. Ideally 3 months before you stop using contraception you should:

- take 5mg of folic acid once a day (available on prescription only).
- stop smoking.
- aim for your HbA1c blood test to be a maximum of 48mmol/L with minimal hypos.
- have a retinal eye screen review.
- have a medication review with your GP or consultant (medications such as statins or ACE inhibitors are not safe during pregnancy).
- if you are overweight it is recommended that you try to reduce your weight before pregnancy. This will help to increase your chances of becoming pregnant and of having a healthy pregnancy.

Once your pregnancy has been confirmed you will have antenatal and diabetes outpatient appointments every 2 to 4 weeks. An eye examination will be carried out at least twice during your pregnancy, normally following your first antenatal clinic appointment and at 28 weeks of pregnancy.

The obstetric team will monitor you and your baby throughout your pregnancy and you will have regular contact with the diabetes team.

Reference No.

**GHP11419\_02\_20**

Department

**Diabetes**

Review due

**February 2023**

## Patient Information

A baby's development will begin before you know you are pregnant. In the first 12 weeks of pregnancy your baby is very sensitive to high blood glucose levels.

This is known to cause some congenital abnormalities, such as heart defects.

You should make every effort to keep your blood glucose as close to the target levels as much as possible, these are:

- a blood glucose level of 5–7 mmol/litre on waking **and**
- a blood glucose level of 4–7 mmol/litre before meals at other times of the day.

## Ready for pregnancy

- You should have a recent HbA1c result within target for pregnancy.
- You should continue taking folic acid 5mg daily.
- You should continue with regular contact with the specialist diabetes team.

When you are aware that you are pregnant, please tell the specialist diabetes team, who will arrange for follow up appointments with the diabetes and obstetric teams. These appointments will include scans of your baby.

## Blood Glucose Targets in Pregnancy

Once you are pregnant there are specific blood glucose targets:

- less than 5.3mmol/L pre meals
- less than 7.8mmol/L one hour post meals
- less than 6.4mmol/L two hour post meals

Your diabetes team will help support you to reach these targets.

## Contact information

### Diabetes Nursing Team

Tel: 0300 422 4266/8613 (answerphone)

Messages are listened to daily and calls are returned within 48 hours, Monday to Friday

Email: [ghn-tr.diabetespregnancy@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.diabetespregnancy@nhs.net)

**Patient  
Information**

**Diabetes Dietitian**

Tel: 0300 422 5506

Messages are listened to every day and calls returned within 48 hours, Monday to Friday

Email: [ghn-tr.diet.diabetes@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.diet.diabetes@nhs.net)

Content reviewed: February 2020