



Testing for Gestational Diabetes

Diabetes is a medical condition in which there are high levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood stream. Gestation diabetes is diabetes that develops during pregnancy and can profoundly influence the development of the baby. Because the hormones produced by the placenta during pregnancy affect the way your body manages glucose in a unique fashion, approximately 5% of women without diabetes prior to pregnancy will develop it during pregnancy.

Our providers test all pregnant patients for gestational diabetes, typically between the 24th and 28th weeks of pregnancy. If certain risk factors occur (such as gestational diabetes with a previous pregnancy), testing may be recommended earlier in your pregnancy.

The Screening Test: One-hour Glucose Tolerance Test

The screening test we currently use is the one hour glucose tolerance test. You will be given a sugary drink (often called glucola) to consume. It is all right to have eaten something that day prior to the test. A blood draw is taken exactly one hour after the solution has been drunk, so be sure to take note of exactly when you drank the glucola. After the test results come back, the physician will determine whether or not further testing is necessary. If the blood sugar level is high, you will be notified that a more extensive test is necessary (the 3-hour glucose tolerance test).

Definitive Testing: Three-Hour Glucose Tolerance Test

- Prior to the test, the patient should not eat or drink anything for at least eight hours. Also, the patient should not smoke during this time. The patient is given a special set of diet instructions for the three days prior to the test. Although not all women require this special diet, some will be given this by the physician.
- The first step is a fasting blood sugar level is drawn. The patient will then be given a sweet drink. She will be asked to remain seated for the duration of the test, without eating, walking or exercising during the time of the test. It is all right to drink water.
- Blood sugar levels will be tested every hour for the next three hours after the sweet solution has been drunk.
- The results of the test are based upon sugar levels that are too high on at least two of the four blood tests taken.

Your Results:

If your one hour test is abnormal you will be notified of the need for the three hour test. If your three hour test is abnormal you will be notified of the need for dietary modifications and education. You will receive training in diet, exercise and blood sugar testing. If these changes are not enough to control blood sugar, medication may be necessary.