MARCH OF DIMES®

Gestational diabetes

Walking in balance, through movement, food, and kinship helps welcome baby in a good way

What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is when our bodies struggle balancing blood sugar (glucose) during pregnancy. American Indian/Alaska Native women are **2 times more likely** to develop gestational diabetes than white women. This also increases the risk of diabetes after pregnancy.

Why does it matter?

Gestational diabetes that is not cared for can lead to health scares for mom and baby, such as:

- Early (preterm) birth
- A baby who grows to be large, which can lead to complications in birth
- High blood pressure or preeclampsia for mom
- Baby having low blood sugar after birth

Ways to stay well

How you can support your pregnancy and health

- **Attend all prenatal visits**. Your provider can help you track your and your baby's health.
- **Eat in a good way**. Choose whole, traditional foods when possible and ask your provider or diabetes educator to help you create a meal plan that works for your life.
- **Stay active without causing stress**. Walking, stretching, or moving with your community can help your body feel balanced.
- If medication is recommended, **follow** your provider's guidance and be consistent.

Resources

Be sure to connect with your local Urban, Tribal, or IHS clinic about pregnancy and diabetes education. Most programs have **culturally-grounded education** for families around food, breast-feeding, and nutrition.

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