

Gestational Diabetes Q&A

What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that only occurs in pregnant women who didn't have diabetes previously. Because it's a common health risk during pregnancy, Capital Women's Care doctors always test their patients for this type of diabetes.

Why does gestational diabetes happen?

Gestational diabetes happens because of changes in the way the body handles insulin while pregnant. Insulin helps your body use glucose for energy.

While you're pregnant, hormones from the baby's placenta can cause glucose to build up in your body. Even though you make extra insulin while pregnant, it's sometimes not sufficient to prevent blood sugar rise, and this can cause gestational diabetes.

When are you tested for gestational diabetes?

If you have diabetes risk factors, you may have a gestational diabetes screening during your first trimester. Otherwise, you'll typically have a gestational diabetes screening at the 24-28 week mark of gestation.

What are the risk factors for gestational diabetes?

Risk factors for gestational diabetes include:

- Being over 25 years of age -- risk increases with age
- Being overweight before pregnancy
- Being a healthy weight but gaining too much pregnancy weight
- Having a previous instance of gestational diabetes
- Having one or more large babies previously
- Having a family history of diabetes
- Having a stillbirth in the past
- Being from ethnic groups including African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and Pacific Islanders

Will you have diabetes for life after having gestational diabetes?

In most cases, no. Some women do have diabetes mellitus after giving birth, but it's rare. However, it's important to know that having gestational diabetes means you're at increased risk for diabetes later.

How is gestational diabetes treated?

In many cases, Capital Women's Care OB/GYNs treat gestational diabetes with dietary counseling and exercise recommendations. The right foods -- in the right quantities -- can help get gestational diabetes under control quickly, and regular exercise is also very helpful.

In the cases where it's needed, the Capital Women's Care doctors can prescribe either oral medications or insulin to manage gestational diabetes.

The Capital Women's Care doctors manage gestational diabetes very effectively, allowing you to have a healthy and happy pregnancy. Use the online appointment maker to arrange a visit with one of our experienced OB/GYNs now.