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***Pre-pregnancy  
and antenatal care  
for women with  
diabetes mellitus  
(General information)***

***Information for women***



## ***Planning a pregnancy?***

Planning ahead for pregnancy is important for all, but for women with diabetes we recommend extra care and advice before conception and throughout pregnancy. This will help to ensure a safe and successful pregnancy.

### ***Before you become pregnant***

- If possible, keep your blood glucose levels between 4 and 6 mmol/l before meals and your HbA<sub>1c</sub> should have been stable and as near target as possible for 3 months before you stop using contraception.

If your blood glucose isn't well controlled in early pregnancy, the risk of stillbirth and miscarriage is increased. It may also affect your baby's early development.

The target for most women for pre-pregnancy glycaemic control should be an HbA<sub>1c</sub> of 42 to 53mmol/l (around 6 to 7%) for 3 months before pregnancy.

- Discuss your current medicines with your diabetes team – you may have to stop or change medicines in preparation for pregnancy (such as medicines for high blood pressure).
- Make sure you are up to date with routine retinal screening.
- Start taking folic acid 5mg each day (you need a prescription for this strength). This helps normal development in the very early weeks of pregnancy.

- Stop smoking. Your diabetes team or GP can refer you to a cessation specialist.
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet. A dietitian is on hand for advice at the specialist clinic.
- Arrange a specialist pre-pregnancy consultation.

### ***Your specialist care team***

At your pre-pregnancy consultation you will see a specialist team comprising of:

- Obstetrician
- Diabetologist (doctor who specialises in diabetes)
- Dietitian
- Specialist diabetes midwife
- Lab technician
- Diabetes Specialist Nurse

### ***What happens at a pre-pregnancy appointment?***

You can discuss any questions you have about diabetic pregnancy and receive advice.

We will test your blood for anaemia, infections such as HIV, syphilis and Hepatitis B, for thyroid and kidney function as well as an HbA<sub>1c</sub> test.

We will offer screening for any complications of your diabetes such as problems with your eyes and kidney function (including microalbumin).

## ***Why should I keep my blood glucose normal?***

### **Early pregnancy**

From the time of conception (usually about 2 weeks after the first day of your last menstrual period) until about 10 weeks, the developing baby is sensitive to very high blood glucose levels. During this time, the major organs are being formed.

### **Later in pregnancy**

If blood glucose is high, your baby can grow larger than normal. This can lead to more difficult birth and may be a reason for needing a caesarean section.

## ***Haemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> (HbA<sub>1c</sub>)***

This is a measure of the average blood glucose over the preceding two months or so. Ideally, it should be less than 53 mmol/l (7%) although this can be challenging to achieve.

## ***Contact telephone numbers***

If you have any questions about your health or care, you can call us on:

**Diabetic Clinic**  
**David Anderson Building, Foresterhill**

**☎ 01224 555700 ☎**

**Antenatal Clinic**  
**Aberdeen Maternity Hospital**

**☎ 01224 552072 ☎**

## ***Useful websites***

**NHS Grampian Diabetes website**



**Scan this code to go to the NHS  
Grampian diabetes website**

**[www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk)**

## **My Diabetes My Way**

Provides information on all aspects of diabetes.as well as ability to access your own diabetes information.

**☎ [www.mydiabetesmyway.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.mydiabetesmyway.scot.nhs.uk)**


## **JDRF Pregnancy toolkit**

Link to download JDRF pregnancy tool kit

 <https://jdrf.org.uk/forms/information-and-leaflet-request-form/>

## **Diabetes UK Information**

**Pregnancy Information Prescription sheet from DUK**

 [https://diabetes-resources-production.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/diabetes-storage/2017-08/0655C%20GP%20Information%20Prescriptions\\_Pregnancy\\_v6.pdf](https://diabetes-resources-production.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/diabetes-storage/2017-08/0655C%20GP%20Information%20Prescriptions_Pregnancy_v6.pdf)

**Guide to diabetes and pregnancy**

 [www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/life-with-diabetes/pregnancy](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/life-with-diabetes/pregnancy)

## **UK Government**

For more information on diabetes and driving.

 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-for-drivers-with-diabetes](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-for-drivers-with-diabetes)

Please note that NHS Grampian is not responsible or liable for the quality of the information, resources or maintenance of external websites. Any advice on external websites is not intended to replace a consultation with an appropriately qualified medical practitioner.

**This leaflet is also available in large print.**

**Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 0535.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.