



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Glucose tolerance testing in pregnancy

Information leaflet



What is a glucose tolerance test?

A glucose tolerance test (known as a GTT) is a blood test that is used to diagnose gestational diabetes which can develop during pregnancy. The test measures your body's ability to maintain a normal blood glucose (sugar) level.

Why do I need a glucose tolerance test (GTT)?

In pregnancy, women will be offered a GTT if they have been identified as having one of the following:

- A raised body mass index (BMI) over 30kg/m². BMI is a measurement of your weight in kilograms and your height in metres. (A healthy BMI is considered to be between 18.5 and 24.9kg/m²)
- A previous baby over 4.5kg (9lbs 14oz)
- Confirmed gestational diabetes in a previous pregnancy
- An ethnicity with high prevalence of diabetes
- A first degree relative that has diabetes (mother/father/brother/sister) including gestational diabetes.

When will the GTT be offered?

The test will be routinely offered between 24 and 26 weeks of pregnancy. An earlier test will be offered to women who developed gestational diabetes in their previous pregnancy.

The medical team may also advise you to have a GTT at a different time in pregnancy if there is clinical indication for it.

Can there be any complications or risks?

There is no risk to your baby while you are having the GTT.

How do I prepare for the GTT?

Leading up to the GTT, please continue to eat your normal diet until the night before your test. Please do not restrict your sugar intake.

If you are on metformin for reasons other than diabetes (for example, polycystic ovarian syndrome) please stop your metformin tablets 5 days before the test. You can restart your metformin after the test.

The night before your GTT

Please do not eat or drink anything other than plain water for a minimum of 8 hours before your GTT. This includes not eating mints, chewing gum and liquid medication for heart burn such as Gaviscon™.

Please do not smoke as this may alter the result of your GTT.

If you forget and you eat something in the morning, please do not worry. It is important that you contact your community midwife or the diabetes midwives and your GTT will then be rearranged.

What will happen?

You will be given an appointment for your GTT. The location may vary depending on your community midwifery team.

When you attend your appointment, you will have a blood sample taken and you will then be given a special glucose drink to take. After two hours the blood test will be repeated.

You must not eat anything until after the second blood sample has been taken. Whilst you are waiting for the second blood test, you will be asked to stay within the department, as too much walking around may affect the results of the test.

What happens afterwards?

After the second sample of blood has been taken, you will be able to eat and drink as normal.

You will also be able to leave after the second blood sample has been taken.

Results

The results of your GTT will be available within a week.

If the result of your GTT is normal

If your GTT result is normal, your community midwife will discuss this with you at your next antenatal appointment. It may also be possible to access the results then if you request them. If you have any concerns regarding the test results, please do not hesitate to contact the diabetes midwifery team for more information.

If the result of your GTT is abnormal

You will be contacted by the diabetes specialist midwife and you will be offered an appointment at the hospital to discuss the result, usually within seven days. Further appointments will be made for you to be seen at an antenatal clinic that specialises in gestational diabetes.

How common is an abnormal result?

Between 2% and 12% of pregnancies can be affected by higher than normal sugar levels in the blood. The actual figure may vary from region to region, depending on several factors including ethnic group.

Useful contact numbers:

To contact the diabetes midwifery team please telephone:

01865 851 039

More information about diabetes and gestational diabetes can be found at:

NHS Choices:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/gestational-diabetes/pages/introduction.aspx.

Diabetes UK:

www.diabetes.org.uk.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

We would like to thank the Oxfordshire Maternity Voices Partnership for their valuable contribution in the development of this leaflet.

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