

Glucose Challenge Test

Gestational Diabetes

Many of the tests done during pregnancy are meant to find problems early so they can be corrected. For example, the hemoglobin blood test looks for anemia (iron-poor blood) and the urine test looks for glucose, which may mean diabetes.

Gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) can be treated if found early. If not, it can cause your baby some serious problems such as low blood glucose, breathing problems and jaundice. It can also put your baby at higher risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes later in life.

Since any woman might develop gestational diabetes during pregnancy, all pregnant women are usually screened for gestational diabetes between weeks 26 and 28. This is the time when the hormones that cause gestational diabetes are at high levels. You do not need to prepare for this test.

How the Glucose Challenge Test is Given

The typical steps for this test at your health care provider's office are:

- You drink a 50-gram glucose beverage.
- You sit quietly for 1 hour.
- Your blood glucose level is measured. A result of 140 or higher is considered a "positive" glucose screen.
- After a positive result, a 3-hour glucose tolerance test is recommended.

The typical steps for the 3-hour glucose tolerance test are:

- On the days before the test, you can eat your normal diet. You fast the night before the test.
- Your fasting blood glucose is measured before the test begins.
- You drink a 100-gram glucose beverage at your health care provider's office.
- You sit quietly for 3 hours.
- Your blood glucose is measured fasting, then at 1-, 2- and 3-hour intervals during the 3 hours.
- Two or more high test results mean you have gestational diabetes.

What Happens if You Test Positive for Gestational Diabetes

Your health care provider will review your test results. He or she will tell you what happens next. You may need any or all of the following:

- a special meal plan
- blood glucose monitoring
- urine tests
- exercise guidelines
- insulin therapy.

You will be referred to diabetes education.