

Glucose Testing In Pregnancy



Why do I need a glucose test?

While being pregnant is a normal state for a woman, it does change her body. This includes the things you can see (increasing uterine size, breast enlargement, etc.) and changes that you can't see. One of the changes you can't see is how your body handles glucose in the bloodstream. The hormones in pregnancy alter your body's ability to store glucose. The glucose test you are about to take is our way of determining if your body is able to metabolize and store glucose correctly while you are pregnant.

Am I at risk for developing diabetes?

the mere fact you are pregnant is a risk factor for diabetes. Other factors include diabetes in a prior pregnancy, prior delivery of a large baby (more than 9 ½ pounds), being more than 30 pounds overweight, excessive weight gain in the pregnancy and a very strong family history of diabetes (multiple close relatives with diabetes). Most importantly, in some women, there are no risk factors. For this reason, it is important to test all pregnant women.

What happens if the One-Hour Glucose Test is abnormal?

The One-Hour Glucose Test is a screening test. If it is abnormal, then you will need to take a Three-Hour Glucose Test. For the Three-Hour Test, you must arrive fasting (nothing to eat or drink for 8 hours). A glucose level is drawn. Then, over a 5-minute period, you drink another "glucose soda" that we provide and your blood is drawn every hour for three hours. If two of the four glucose levels are abnormal or if just the fasting level is high, then you have Gestational Diabetes.

What happens if I have diabetes?

We will schedule an appointment for you with a diabetes educator. She will explain what type of foods you can eat and how to eat them. You will be taught to do finger sticks to check your glucose levels at home. You will need to check your glucose level several times a day. Every few weeks, we may draw some blood to check your glucose levels. If you are able to maintain normal glucose levels on the diet, then there is no increase risk to you or your baby. In rare cases, a pregnant woman cannot control her glucose levels by diet alone and may require insulin. This is not very common so please don't worry about this.

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How do I take the One-Hour Glucose Test?

In most cases, you will be given the glucose drink to take home with you. If this is the case, please drink it about 45 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Prior to drinking the glucose “soda”, you do not have to be fasting but please do not eat a full meal or have any sugary foods (like soda, candy, cookies, etc.). In rare cases it can falsely elevate the test and require you to do the Three-Hour Glucose Test described above. Once you drink the glucose “soda”, **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING**. Please keep the “soda” refrigerated prior to taking the test (it tastes better cold) but do not let anyone else taste or drink the soda. You must swallow all of it yourself. Drink the entire soda in 5 minutes and LOOK AT YOUR WATCH once you are done. We MUST draw your blood ONE HOUR after you have FINISHED drinking the “soda”. If you are late, we will have to repeat the entire test.

When you arrive for your appointment, please let our receptionist know what time you are scheduled for your blood draw. PLEASE DON'T COUNT ON HER TO REMEMBER. At 2 minutes until your blood draw, please get the Medical Assistant to draw your blood even if we are not ready to do your visit.

By doing the test in this manner, we are trying to decrease the amount of time you spend waiting in the office. If you are afraid of running late, you can always drink the glucose “soda” in the office and wait for one hour there. We hope this information makes the importance of the glucose test clear. If you have any questions, please ask.

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