

## - Pregnancy

# Regular insulin-monitoring, healthy diet & lifestyle keep gestational diabetes at bay

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Diabetes, diagnosed for the first time in women during pregnancy, is called gestational diabetes mellitus. Like other types of diabetes, gestational diabetes shoots up your blood sugar levels, which can affect the pregnancy and the baby's health.

According to the International Diabetes Federation, around 6 million deliveries in India have complications due to blood sugar level variations during pregnancy. Out of this, 90 per cent are due to gestational diabetes.

Usually, the blood glucose level becomes normal after delivery. However, research shows that women with gestational diabetes are at higher risk for developing Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases post-delivery or in the future.

"It increases the baby's risk of birth defects, stillbirth, premature birth or being born too large, or developing obesity or type 2 diabetes in the future. It also increases the risk of women needing a caesarean section," says Dr RM Anjana, MD, Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre.

Dr Hannah Wesley, Research Associate, Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, said that pregnant women who are diabetic require regular check-ups with constant monitoring of their blood sugar levels. "They have to take a diabetes test 4-12 weeks post-delivery and continue monitoring once every 1-3 years even if level remains stable," she added. "Women with no trace of diabetes during pregnancy must also get tested annually post-delivery. There's no cure or complete prevention, but healthier lifestyle and proper monitoring before and after pregnancy can reduce the risk factors."