

Diabetes Basics - Gestational Diabetes

Some women, about 3 to 5 percent of all pregnant women, get this form of diabetes during pregnancy. It usually ends when the baby is born, but some women who have gestational diabetes go on to develop diabetes when they get older. Some studies have reported that almost 40 percent of women who have gestational diabetes will go on to develop type 2 diabetes. So, if you have had gestational diabetes, you need to see your doctor every year and ask to be screened for type 2 diabetes.

Gestational diabetes usually doesn't cause birth defects, but one of the problems is the possibility of having a baby that is considerably larger than normal. There is also the risk that the baby might have low blood sugar right after it's born.

Gestational diabetes happens when the body doesn't make enough insulin and resists the action of insulin because of hormones. The condition develops about midway through the pregnancy. Although most women with this condition are treated with diet, some women may need insulin. The problem can't be treated with pills because the medication can harm the baby.