

Information for Patients

Glucose Tolerance Testing

What is the Glucose Tolerance Test?

A Glucose Tolerance Test is a test to see how your body handles a measured amount of sugar.

Why would I need this test?

Usually your body controls the level of sugar in the blood. Sometimes in pregnancy the control of the level of sugar in the blood is not quite as good as it should be. If you get higher levels of blood sugar than normal this is called 'Gestational Diabetes' ('gestational' means related to pregnancy, Gestational Diabetes means diabetes in pregnancy).

Certain groups of women are more likely to have this problem; these women are offered a test to look for gestational diabetes during pregnancy. You have a higher chance of getting gestational diabetes if someone in your family has diabetes, if you or your family are from an area where diabetes is more common, if you are overweight when you become pregnant, or if you have had a bigger baby in the past.

There are often no symptoms to make you realise that your body is not controlling the level of sugar in your blood as well as it should. Sometimes the only way of finding out is to do a test (Glucose Tolerance Test) to see how your body handles a measured amount of sugar.

Your doctor or midwife may suggest this test and it is usually booked when you are approximately 26 weeks pregnant. This may be done earlier if you have had gestational diabetes in the past.

What does the test involve?

Have nothing to eat or drink (except plain water) from midnight the night before your appointment for the test.

If you are a smoker, **do not** smoke on the morning of the test.

Please attend the Antenatal Clinic for the test.

A blood sample will be taken to check the level of sugar in your blood after you have starved overnight.

You will be given a measured amount of sugar in a drink.

Please **do not** eat or drink anything (except plain water) for another 2 hours. We advise that you stay in the waiting area during this time as any exercise including walking can produce a falsely reassuring result.

Two hours after the drink, another blood sample will be taken to see how your body has dealt with the sugar you were given.

The blood samples will be sent to the laboratory and the results are usually available within a day or two.

The results


If the test shows normal sugar levels you will **not** be contacted and there is nothing to worry about. You will continue your normal antenatal care.

If the test shows high sugar levels then you have gestational diabetes. This means that there is extra sugar in your blood which is easily available to your baby. You will therefore be contacted by the Diabetes Specialist Midwives for advice and antenatal care to help you monitor and correct the level of sugar in your blood and help you and your baby stay healthy.

What happens after I've had my baby?

Since this problem is related to pregnancy it usually goes back to normal once the pregnancy is over. However, if you have gestational diabetes in pregnancy it is important to adhere to healthy lifestyle changes, including eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly, as you are at increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in later years.

If you have any further questions or worries before the test, please do not hesitate to contact the Antenatal Clinic Midwives for further information on:

 (0161) 276 6423
9.00 am – 5.00 pm, Monday – Friday