



Patient education: Preparing for pregnancy when you have diabetes (The Basics)

[Written by the doctors and editors at UpToDate](#)

How should I prepare for pregnancy if I have diabetes?

If you want to get pregnant, it is very important that you talk to your doctors **before** you start trying to get pregnant. You will need to see your primary care doctor and possibly an obstetrician (a doctor who takes care of pregnant women). If you see an endocrinologist (a doctor who handles your diabetes), you should mention your pregnancy plans to him or her, too. These doctors can make sure that you do everything possible to have a healthy baby.

Before you start trying to get pregnant, you will need to work closely with your healthcare team to get your blood sugar as close to normal as possible. That might mean using more insulin, if you already use it. Or switching to insulin, if you do not already use it. Plus, you might need to change the way you eat.

Normal blood sugar levels help prevent miscarriages and birth defects.

You should also talk to your doctors about **all** medicines you take, including any supplements or herbal medicines. If you use any medicines that are not safe to take during pregnancy, you might need to switch or go off them.

This article discusses the things women with diabetes should do before getting pregnant. There are also steps that **all** women should take before trying to get pregnant. (See "[Patient education: How to plan and prepare for a healthy pregnancy \(The Basics\)](#)".)

Which medicines should I stop taking before I try to get pregnant?

You should:

- Stop taking certain medicines used to treat high blood pressure or kidney disease. It is especially important to stop medicines called angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (usually called "ACE inhibitors") and angiotensin receptor blockers (usually called "ARBs"). These medicines can cause birth defects.

But don't stop your high blood pressure medicine on your own. High blood pressure can be harmful. Your doctor will switch you to a blood pressure medicine that is safe to take during pregnancy.

- Stop taking medicines called statins, which are used to lower cholesterol. These medicines have not been well studied in pregnant women. But doctors recommend stopping them, because there is a chance they could affect a baby's development.

Remember, by the time a woman discovers she is pregnant, her baby has already started to form many important body parts. That's why it is not enough to stop taking medicines that might be harmful when you learn you are pregnant.

If you get pregnant while taking any medicines, tell your doctors right away. They can explain any possible risks to your baby and help you decide how best to move forward.

Before you start trying to get pregnant, your doctors might want you to stop taking diabetes medicines that come in pill form. They might want you to use insulin instead, or a different pill.

Will I need any tests before I start trying to get pregnant?

Yes. You will need these tests:

- **An eye exam** (if you have not had one in the last 12 months) – You will need to be checked for an eye disease called "diabetic retinopathy." This condition is caused by diabetes, and it can lead to vision loss or even blindness. Pregnancy can increase the chance that a woman will get diabetic retinopathy, and it can make the condition worse in women who already have it. If you have severe diabetic retinopathy, you might need to treat the condition before you get pregnant.
- **Blood and urine tests to check the health of your kidneys** – People with diabetes are at risk for kidney disease. Pregnancy can worsen kidney disease that already exists.
- **Blood pressure test** – Having high blood pressure during pregnancy can cause problems for you and your baby. If your blood pressure is too high, your doctors might give you medicines to treat it. But they will choose medicines that are safe to use during pregnancy. Some of the medicines normally used to treat high blood pressure are not safe to use during pregnancy.

- **Blood tests to measure thyroid hormone levels** – Having normal thyroid hormone levels is very important for you and a developing baby. If your tests show that your thyroid hormone levels are too high or too low, you might need treatments to get them back to normal.
- **Urine tests to check for infection** – Women with diabetes can have bladder or kidney infections and not know it. It's important to treat these before pregnancy.

More on this topic

[Patient education: How to plan and prepare for a healthy pregnancy \(The Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Care during pregnancy for women with type 1 or type 2 diabetes \(The Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Type 1 diabetes \(The Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Type 2 diabetes \(The Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Diabetes and diet \(The Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Diabetic retinopathy \(The Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Chronic kidney disease \(The Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Care during pregnancy for women with type 1 or 2 diabetes \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Type 1 diabetes: Overview \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Type 2 diabetes: Overview \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Type 1 diabetes and diet \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Type 2 diabetes and diet \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)

[Patient education: Chronic kidney disease \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)

All topics are updated as new evidence becomes available and our [peer review process](#) is complete.

This topic retrieved from UpToDate on: May 01, 2020.

The content on the UpToDate website is not intended nor recommended as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your own physician or other qualified health care professional regarding any medical questions or conditions. The use of UpToDate content is governed by the [UpToDate Terms of Use](#). ©2020 UpToDate, Inc. All rights reserved.