

# Gestational Diabetes

## How could this affect me and my baby?

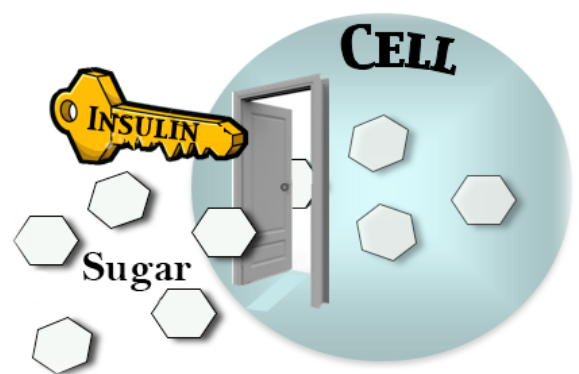
### Gestational diabetes is not the mother's fault.

#### *What is Gestational Diabetes?*

Gestational diabetes can happen to anyone and is not directly related to a mother's diet. Though the cause of gestational diabetes is not completely known, there are clues as to what likely causes it. As the body grows and changes to meet the needs of the baby, hormones also change to help the baby develop. Sometimes, these hormones also block the action of the mother's insulin in her body. This is called "insulin resistance".

Insulin resistance makes it hard for the mother's body to use insulin properly. Since insulin acts as a key, letting the cells in our body use the sugar in our blood, insulin resistance doesn't allow the mother's body to properly use the sugar in her blood stream. Gestational diabetes starts when the mother's body is not able to make and use all the insulin it needs during pregnancy.

Without enough insulin, glucose cannot leave the blood and be used as energy in the body. Glucose builds up in the blood causing high blood sugar.



*Insulin acts as a key by letting the cells in our body use the sugar in our blood.*

#### *Growing Baby, Growing Impact*

Gestational diabetes usually affects the mother late in pregnancy, once the baby's body has been formed, but while the baby is busy growing.

Untreated or poorly controlled gestational diabetes can hurt your baby. Since the mother's body has higher levels of sugar, this means the baby is also receiving higher levels of sugar as the mother supplies baby with blood. This can cause the baby's pancreas to make extra insulin to get rid of the extra sugar. Since the baby is receiving more sugar than it needs to grow and develop, the extra sugar is converted to fat in the baby.

This can lead to a big baby at birth. Being larger in size can cause health problems for baby including damage of shoulders during birth. Because of the extra insulin made by baby in utero, newborns may also have very low blood sugar levels at birth. Additionally, they are at higher risk for breathing problems at birth.

In order to best help your gestational diabetes controlled,  
***please bring a blood sugar log with you to every appointment you have.***  
This will help your provider know how to best help you with your gestational diabetes.