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## Thinking of having a baby?: Diabetes and Pregnancy

## Diabetes and Pregnancy:

### How to optimise your health before Pregnancy

If you are diabetic, it is important that your diabetes is well controlled before you get pregnant to help to reduce the risks of complications for yourself and your baby. There are certain things that can be done before you become pregnant to help. The majority of women with diabetes have healthy babies, but this leaflet is to highlight how we can improve the outcomes for both you and your baby.

#### Here is a brief overview of the risks:

With diabetes there is a higher risk during pregnancy of complications such as miscarriage, early labour, congenital malformation, low blood sugar in new born pre-eclampsia (which is a disorder of high blood pressure and can affect your organs such as the kidneys), having a large baby or rapid worsening of diabetic eye disease in the mother. In the longterm, your baby may be at increased risk of developing diabetes or obesity in later life.

#### Reducing your risk

The following can help to reduce these risks before becoming pregnant:

- You should have your diabetic eye screening done within 6 months of planning to get pregnant. Your eyes should be screened before becoming pregnant and treated as needed.
- You should aim for good blood sugar (BM) control before pregnancy.
  - Fasting BMs 5-7 on waking and
  - BMs 4-7 before meals at other times
- This good control should continue throughout pregnancy
- Before getting pregnant, you should have monthly HbA1c blood tests and more frequent monitoring of BMs

## Local Voluntary Services

Service	Description	Contact Details
Anna Freud Centre	Collection of services for families. Social Care.	0207 794 2313
Bikur Cholem	Orthodox Jewish MH Support Network/Services	020 8800 7575
Bump Buddies	Shoreditch Trust based support network	<a href="http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/bump-buddies/">http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/bump-buddies/</a>
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services	GP Referral
Children's Centre	Children's day care and activity centres.	<a href="https://www.learningtrust.co.uk/ChildcarePlay/Pages/Children'sCentresandNurses.aspx">https://www.learningtrust.co.uk/ChildcarePlay/Pages/Children'sCentresandNurses.aspx</a>
CMHT Adult Mental Health	Community Mental Health	GP Referral
CYPS	Children and Young People's Service	GP Referral
Derman	Turkish/Kurdish support service	020 7613 5944
Ezer Leylolds	Orthodox Jewish family support group	020 8800 2488
First Steps	CAMHS Service	020 7683 4611
Hackney Wellbeing	Centre for Better Health	020 8985 3570
Mind	Mental Health Charity	020 8985 4239
Netmums	Online Support Network/Services	<a href="https://www.netmums.com/hackney">https://www.netmums.com/hackney</a>
Off Centre	Young People's MH Service Hackney	020 8986 4016
Orbit	Drug and Alcohol Support for Mothers	020 7749 9850

### Support and advice:

However, as has been discussed there are many local voluntary services to contact in order to get help with weight loss and other dietary and exercise based queries. Please see the Hackney iCARE database for local classes in your area, as well as the organisations in the table overleaf for any further advice.

<https://www.hackneyicare.org.uk/kb5/hackney/asch/home.page>



### Reducing your risk ctd:

- Before getting pregnant, your HbA1c should be < 6.5% if this is possible without problematic hypos (low blood sugar levels)
- You should keep your weight within the healthy range, aiming for a BMI (body mass index) of less than 27
- You should take a higher dose of folic acid from your doctor, 5mg, when trying to conceive and up until the end of the first trimester (12 weeks)
- You should see your doctor to review all medications before you get pregnant. During pregnancy, metformin and insulin should be used for treatment, but all other glucose-lowering medications should be stopped. If you are taking a blood pressure medicine called an ACE inhibitor (such as Ramipril) or an angiotensin II receptor blocker (such as Losartan) or a cholesterol-lowering tablet called a statin (such as atorvastatin), these should be stopped before pregnancy as they are not safe to take during pregnancy, and an alternative should be started by your doctor as appropriate. Always consult your doctor before stopping any medications.
- You should have your kidneys checked by means of a urine test and blood test before stopping contraception as if there is any abnormality, this should be treated by a kidney specialist before you get pregnant.

It is also important that you and your family are aware that closer medical observation will be required during pregnancy and labour. It is important to control your diet, body weight and exercise regularly during pregnancy. Low blood sugar levels (hypos) can occur more frequently during pregnancy and you may have reduced awareness of hypos in pregnancy. Also, nausea and vomiting in early pregnancy can affect your blood sugars and it is important to monitor them closely if you do suffer with this.

During labour, a close eye will also need to be kept on your blood sugar and it is important to establish early feeding for the newborn to reduce the risk of the baby having low sugar levels. Your baby may also need closer observation during the neonatal period.

It is therefore important that as a diabetic you avoid an unplanned pregnancy. You should also avoid pregnancy if your diabetes is very poorly controlled (HbA1c more than 10%).

The good news is we can refer you to a preconception clinic to help to optimise your diabetes care before becoming pregnant if needed and support you during your pregnancy.