

[IMAGE]

Avoiding Gestational Diabetes: Good for Mom, Good for Baby

By Editorial Staff

We're talking about gestational diabetes, a condition approximately 6-9 percent of women experience during pregnancy, according to the CDC. Gestational diabetes can be dangerous enough for the expectant mother, increasing her risk of potential complications such as high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia and future diabetes. But gestational diabetes also may pose health risks to the child, including high or low birth weight, breathing difficulties, low blood sugar, and obesity and diabetes later in life. (Source: [Mayo Clinic](#))

But the potential health risks to the child don't end there, unfortunately. A study published in *JAMA Network Open* suggests children born to mothers who experienced gestational diabetes are at higher risk for any psychiatric condition in the first 40 years of life or a specific psychiatric condition (anxiety disorders, developmental disorders, behavioral disorders, intellectual disabilities or schizophrenia) compared to offspring born to mothers not diagnosed with diabetes during pregnancy. The study was large, involving nearly 2.5 million live births over a nearly 40-year period (1978-2016), with 6.4 percent of babies born receiving a psychiatric diagnosis during their first 40 years of life.

Diabetes is no laughing matter, whether you're diagnosed during pregnancy or at any time. To protect yourself and your unborn child, what can you do? The Mayo Clinic suggests a four-step prevention approach: 1) Eat healthy foods and watch portion sizes. 2) Exercise before and after pregnancy. 3) Start pregnancy at a healthy weight. 4) Don't gain more weight than recommended by your doctor.

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