

**Women Who Have Had Gestational Diabetes Have Lifelong Diabetes Risk
Lifestyle Changes Can Prevent or Delay Disease**

Women who have had gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) have a 20 to 50 percent chance of getting diabetes in the future, and their offspring have a higher risk than other children for obesity and diabetes. *It's Never Too Early to Prevent Diabetes. A Lifetime of Small Steps for a Healthy Family*, the latest diabetes prevention campaign from the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), is spreading the word about the risk for type 2 diabetes faced by women with a history of GDM and their offspring. The campaign addresses small steps women can take to prevent or delay the disease. Specifically, woman can lose a small amount of weight if overweight, make healthy food choices, and be more physically active. Moms can also help their children lower their risk for type 2 diabetes by helping them stay at a healthy weight.

The campaign, with materials in English and Spanish, offers tips such as:

- Women need to know if they had GDM and should let their current doctors know.
- Women should be tested for type 2 diabetes regularly: 6 to 12 weeks after the baby is born, then every 1 to 2 years.
- Women should talk to their doctor if they plan to become pregnant again.
- Breast feeding may lower the child's risk for diabetes.
- Mothers need to aim for their pre-pregnancy weight 6 to 12 months after the baby is born. Then, if still overweight, work to lose at least 5 to 7 percent (10 to 14 pounds for someone who weighs 200 pounds) of body weight slowly, over time, and keep it off.

Key steps for women and their families to reach and stay at a healthy weight include:

- Eat a mix of healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, dry beans, whole grains, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese.
- Eat smaller portions.
- Be physically active at least 30 minutes, 5 days per week to help burn calories and lose weight. Brisk walking is a good example.
- Follow a healthy lifestyle together as a family. Help family members stay at a healthy weight by eating healthy foods and moving more.
- Help children learn to make healthy food choices and be physically active 60 minutes a day.
- Limit TV, video, and computer game time to an hour or two a day.

GDM is a form of diabetes that occurs in some pregnant women and affects about 7 percent of all U.S. pregnancies – about 200,000 each year. GDM occurs more in obese

women and women with a family history of diabetes, and among African American, Hispanic/Latino and American Indian and Alaska Native women.

It's Never Too Early to Prevent Diabetes is the latest addition to NDEP's campaign, *Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent type 2 Diabetes*, the nation's first comprehensive multicultural type 2 diabetes prevention campaign. To find out more about the NDEP or to get a copy of the new *It's Never Too Early to Prevent Diabetes. A Lifetime of Small Steps for a Healthy Family*. tip sheet in English, the *Nunca es muy temprano para prevenir la diabetes. Pequeños pasos de por vida para una familia sana*. tip sheet in Spanish, and other *Small Steps. Big Rewards.* diabetes prevention materials, visit <http://www.ndep.nih.gov> or call 1-800-438-5383.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [National Diabetes Education Program](#) is jointly sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the support of more than 200 partners.