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History of Gestational Diabetes Raises Lifelong Diabetes Risk In Mother and Child
Lifestyle Changes Can Prevent Or Delay Later Diabetes

WASHINGTON— *It's Never Too Early to Prevent Diabetes*, the latest diabetes prevention campaign message by the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), is spreading the word about the risk for type 2 diabetes faced by women with a history of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) and their offspring. On April 25th the NDEP joined Deputy Surgeon General, RADM Kenneth P. Moritsugu and Griffin P. Rodgers, M.D., acting director of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in Washington to announce this latest message in an ongoing national public awareness effort. The NDEP is jointly sponsored by the NIH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, agencies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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. The campaign offers materials that can help women with a history of GDM take steps to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes and help their children lower their risk for the disease. Available campaign materials include a tip sheet in English and Spanish for women who have had GDM, a tip sheet in English and Spanish for children at risk for type 2 diabetes, and a booklet for adults to help women and their families make healthy food choices and be more physically active to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. These materials are available on the NDEP website at www.ndep.nih.gov.

"Mothers who've had GDM need to know that they and their children have an increased lifelong risk for developing type 2 diabetes," explained Moritsugu. "The risk doesn't go away. By making modest lifestyle changes to lose a small amount of weight, usually by making healthy food choices and being more physically active, women can help prevent or delay the disease. Children can lower their risk for type 2 diabetes by not becoming overweight or obese."

GDM is a form of glucose intolerance that occurs during pregnancy. GDM affects about 7 percent of all U.S. pregnancies annually, resulting in approximately 200,000 cases a year. After pregnancy, 5 to 10 percent of women who had GDM continue to have type 2 diabetes. Women with a history of GDM have a 20 to 50 percent chance of developing diabetes in the future, and their children are at increased risk for obesity and diabetes during childhood and adolescence compared to other children.

The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), an NIDDK-funded clinical trial, found that people at increased risk for type 2 diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by losing 5 to 7 percent of their body weight through increased physical activity and a low fat, low calorie eating plan. The DPP included several hundred women with a history of GDM, and the powerful reduction in risk of diabetes demonstrated in the study—up to 58 percent—was found in all subgroups including this group of women.

“Diabetes prevention is proven, possible, and powerful,” said Dr. Rodgers. “Small steps like eating fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and playing with your kids in the park can yield a lifetime of healthy rewards for the entire family.”

Recent reports have shown high or increasing rates for GDM in various parts of the country, including:

- Washington, D.C, where in 2003 the GDM prevalence rate in Hispanic women was 12 percent —close to the highest rate of 14 percent seen in some American Indian women.
- New York City, where the GDM prevalence rate increased 46 percent from 1990 to 2002— with the highest increase found among Asian women.
- Colorado, where the GDM prevalence rate increased 95 percent from 1994 to 2002— with the highest among Hispanic women.
- Northern California, where the number of new cases each year increased 35 percent from 1991 to 2000.

These regional GDM prevalence rates raise concern that the increase may reflect the ongoing pattern of increasing obesity and contribute to the upsurge in cases of diabetes in the U.S.

The NDEP has materials for health care professionals and people at risk for diabetes -- including older adults, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. For more information about the NDEP or to obtain a copy of the new *It's Never Too Early to Prevent Diabetes* and *Nunca es muy temprano para prevenir la diabetes* tip sheets and other *Small Steps. Big Rewards.* diabetes prevention materials, visit www.ndep.nih.gov or call 1-800-438-5383.

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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 partner organizations.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — The Nation's Medical Research Agency — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit <http://www.nih.gov>.