

## What is an oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT)?

This test is to find out if you have gestational diabetes. It is usually carried out around 24-28 weeks of your pregnancy but your doctor may decide you need it earlier.

## What is gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that starts during pregnancy. It occurs in 12% of pregnancies in the west of Ireland. If you have diabetes, your body is not able to control your sugar levels.

## What are the symptoms?

Very often there are no symptoms. Some women might have increased thirst, increased need to pass urine or increased hunger.

## Why is it important to diagnose diabetes?

Gestational diabetes can affect your baby's growth and can cause pregnancy complications. However, diabetes can be treated and the risks reduced.

## Why do I need this test?

The following are some reasons why you might need this test:

- You had some sugar in your urine on two occasions or a large amount on one occasion.
- You previously delivered a large baby (over 4.5kg)
- Your body mass index (BMI) is 25-30kg/m<sup>2</sup> or over.
- You have a family history of diabetes.
- You had a previous unexplained stillbirth.
- You belong to an ethnic minority – for example: South Asian, Afro Caribbean, African.
- You have polycystic ovarian syndrome.
- You are on long-term steroids.
- You have increased fluid around the baby (polyhydramnios)
- You have a history of thyroid disease or other endocrine disorder.
- You are on fertility treatment.
- You have coeliac disease or other autoimmune disorder.
- You are over 30 years of age

## How is the test done?

You will be asked to:

- Eat and drink normally in the days before your test.
- Fast from 10pm the night before your test.

- You may drink sips of water only.
- You must not smoke or chew anything.
- The test takes 2-3 hours.
- It is important that you do not rush around prior to or when you are having your OGTT.
- You must not eat, smoke or drink anything other than water during the OGTT.

If you do not follow this advice, the test will have to be repeated. We suggest you bring some reading material to keep you occupied during the test and a snack to eat after the test is completed.

## Where will be the test be done?

The test is usually performed in the Maternity Outpatients Department. You must book into reception on arrival.

## What will happen during the test?

- A blood sample will be taken from the vein on your arm. (1<sup>st</sup> blood sample – fasting).
- You will be asked to drink a prepared glucose drink (polycal).
- You will then rest for an hour after which another blood sample will be taken. (2<sup>nd</sup> blood sample).
- The final blood test will be taken one hour later. You may then eat and go home. (3<sup>rd</sup> blood sample).

## When will I get the results?

The results take a few days to process. If they are normal, you will be informed of the results at your next antenatal visit.

If the results are abnormal, you will be contacted by a midwife or medical doctor who will refer you to the Combined Diabetes and Antenatal Clinic. If you have this test done with your GP, and the results are abnormal, he or she will refer you directly to the Combined Diabetes and Antenatal Clinic.

## What happens in the Combined Diabetes and Antenatal Clinic?

You will meet diabetes doctors and nurses that specialise in diabetes who will advise you on how to manage this condition.

## If I have diabetes, does this mean I need a caesarean delivery?

Having a diagnosis of diabetes does not automatically mean you need a caesarean delivery.

## What happens to me after my baby is born?

Gestational diabetes will usually disappear after you have your baby. However, you should have another OGTT around 12 weeks after delivery for follow-up. This will be arranged for you.

## What about my baby?

Babies born to women with diabetes should be fed as soon as possible after birth. Research shows that breastfed babies are less likely to develop diabetes in the future. Research also shows that breastfeeding reduces your own risk of type 2 diabetes in the future.

## What about future pregnancies?

Gestational diabetes puts you at increased risk of getting gestational diabetes again in future pregnancies. It is recommended that you have your glucose reassessed early in any future pregnancy.

## Further Information

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to speak to your doctor or midwife.

More information on diabetes in pregnancy research in the west of Ireland is available at: [www.atlanticdipireland.com](http://www.atlanticdipireland.com) or from the

**Endocrinology & Diabetes Day Centre  
Pregnancy Service  
Galway University Hospitals  
Tel: (091) 542039 / (086) 2495880**



# Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT)

A guide for pregnant women



Your appointment for an oral glucose tolerance test is made for:

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ am

in the Maternity Outpatients Department

**Maternity Outpatients Department  
Galway University Hospitals  
Tel: (091) 544527**