National Diabetes Awareness Month--November 2010

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month. Be aware of your family health history. Family history is an important risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. If you or someone you love had gestational diabetes while pregnant, both mom and baby have a lifelong risk for developing diabetes. Because of this risk, it is recommended moms get tested for diabetes after the baby is born, then every one to three years.

What is Gestational Diabetes?

It is a type of diabetes that occurs only during pregnancy. Hormones produced during pregnancy increases a woman's blood sugar more than normal. Gestational diabetes starts if your body cannot control these blood sugar levels by itself.

What is my risk of gestational diabetes?

Talk with your doctor about your risk at your first prenatal visit. Risk increases if you answer yes to any of the following:

- I have a parent, brother or sister with diabetes.
- I am African American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino or Pacific Islander.
- I am 25 years old or older.
- I am overweight.
- I have had gestational diabetes before, or previously given birth to at least one baby weighing more than nine pounds.
- I have been told I have pre-diabetes, a condition in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes.

How can gestational diabetes affect my baby?

Untreated or uncontrolled gestational diabetes can mean problems for your baby including:

- Large birth weight which can make delivery difficult and more dangerous for you and your baby.
- Prolonged low blood sugar levels in newborns after birth can starve the brain of sugar resulting in seizures or even brain injury.
- Babies born to mothers with gestational diabetes sometimes have lungs that are not fully grown resulting in breathing problems.

What can I do?

- Talk to your doctor about gestational diabetes during prenatal visits.
- If diagnosed with gestational diabetes, be sure to inform all future health care providers of the diagnosis.

- Get tested for diabetes six to 12 weeks after your baby is born, then every one to three years.
- Breastfeed your baby. It may lower your risk and your child's risk for type 2 diabetes.
- Talk to your doctor if you plan to become pregnant again in the future.
- Try to reach your pre-pregnancy weight six to 12 months after your baby is born. Breastfeeding your baby may also help you to return to a healthy weight quicker.
- Make healthy food choices such as fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, dry beans and peas, whole grains, and low-fat or non-fat (skim) dairy. Choose water to drink.
- Eat smaller portions of healthy foods to help you reach and stay at a healthy weight.
- Be active at least 30 minutes, five days per week to help burn calories and lose weight.
- Stop smoking. Smoking affects your blood sugar levels which makes it harder to control diabetes. Smoking also increases your risks for having a heart attack and stroke. There is no safe level of smoking during pregnancy. Smoking while pregnant is a common cause of miscarriage, prematurity and low birth weight. It can increase your baby's risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and for developing lung problems.
- Celebrate The Great American Smokeout on November 18, 2010. Use this date to quit or make a plan to quit. By doing so, you will take an important step towards a healthier life for you and the ones you love. Quitting smoking is not easy, but it can be done. To have the best chance of quitting successfully, you need to know what you're up against, what your options are and where to go for help.
- Call the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) to receive free telephone counseling or enroll electronically by following this link: http://www.nationaljewish.org/ohio/Enrollment/index.aspx.

Other Resources

National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP): To learn more about the steps to reduce the risk of developing diabetes, check out risk tests in English and Spanish. Visit http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or call 1-888-693-NDEP (6337); TTY: 1-866-569-1162. Tip sheets are available in both English and Spanish.

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse: http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes or 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.

Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Diabetes Prevention and Control Program: http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/hprr/diabete/diab1.aspx.

Healthy Ohio
The State of Living Well.