

Name:  
Name of Doctor/Nurse:

Date:

**Diabetes UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

# Diabetes, contraception and pregnancy

## Information Prescription

**Even if having a baby is the last thing on your mind, there are things you need to know. Diabetes increases the risks of complications in pregnancy, but by planning your pregnancy and seeking advice you can reduce the risks and have a healthy and enjoyable pregnancy. And this starts with contraception.**

### What contraception can I use?

In general, women with diabetes can choose from the full range of contraception. If you have diabetes related complications, such as eye, kidney or nerve damage, your options may be more limited. Discuss with your healthcare team the best contraception for you.

### The risks of pregnancy and diabetes

#### What are the risks to you?



- Having a miscarriage.
- Problems with eyes and kidneys.
- Having a larger baby which can cause problems during labour.

#### What are the risks to your baby?



- Heart problems, spina bifida and other disabilities.
- Being stillborn or dying shortly after birth.
- Problems after birth that require special or intensive hospital care.

### Before trying for a baby

If you're not planning a pregnancy it's important to use effective contraception. If you are planning a pregnancy agree a plan with your healthcare team at least 12 weeks before trying to get pregnant. It may involve a little more work, but it will increase your chance of a successful pregnancy. The plan should include:

### Agreed action plan

#### My personal goal is:

#### To be achieved when:

#### The two steps that I will take to achieve this are:

(Discuss and agree with your doctor or nurse. Think about what, where, when and how?)

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#### Medication

Ask your doctor or nurse to review your medications as some routine medications taken by women with diabetes may harm your baby.

#### Blood glucose (sugar)

Tight blood glucose control will increase your chances of having a healthy pregnancy. This can be difficult but it reduces the risks to your baby. Agree a target with your doctor or nurse that you feel you can safely achieve without problematic hypos (low glucose). It's important not to get pregnant if your HbA1c is over 86mmol/mol (10 per cent).

#### Folic acid

You need a prescription for high dose folic acid (**5mg**) – start taking it **before** trying to get pregnant.

#### Lifestyle

Achieving a normal body weight and staying active will improve your chances of getting pregnant, help with your glucose control and your health during pregnancy.

Stop smoking and drinking alcohol – for help giving up ask your doctor or nurse.

#### Unplanned pregnancy?

Don't panic. Ask your healthcare team for an urgent referral to the diabetes pregnancy clinic where you can agree a plan to reduce the risks to you and your baby.

For information or support, call Diabetes UK Helpline: **0345 123 2399\*** Monday to Friday, 9am–6pm, or go to [www.diabetes.org.uk/info-preg](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/info-preg)