

# Screening for Gestational Diabetes: Instructions for the 50 gram one hour glucose challenge test

## One-Hour Oral Glucose Challenge Test (GCT): Screening

During the late second or early third trimester of your pregnancy, your provider will recommend a screening test for gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes is a condition that can first occur between 24 and 28 weeks gestation, when the placenta produces hormones that can interfere with a woman's insulin function, causing her blood sugar level to rise. While most healthy pregnant women do fine with this mild insulin resistance, some have higher than normal blood sugar values and may go on to develop gestational diabetes. If untreated, gestational diabetes can lead to complications and health problems for the baby. An elevated blood sugar level may indicate that you have this condition. Depending on the screening test results, your provider may order a diagnostic 3- hour oral [glucose tolerance test](#) (OGTT). A blood sugar value >140 will identify approximately 80% of women with gestational diabetes and a cutoff of >130 mg/dl identifies 90% of women with GDM. At Advanced Ob-Gyn we use a 140 cutoff.

**How to Prepare. THIS IS NOT A FASTING TEST! We recommend that you eat a high protein, low-carb breakfast the day of the test, as this decreases unpleasant side effects. Bring a good quality snack to eat immediately following the test.**

- The test is usually done after your appointment between 24-28 weeks.
- Your provider will have already given you a sugar solution, called glucola at your previous visit. Make sure you drink the entire amount within a five-minute period. Many women find that drinking it very cold, over ice, and with a straw makes it more tolerable.
- Note the time. You will need to have your blood drawn for the test **ONE HOUR** after you finish drinking the glucola. Please time it appropriately.
- Do not eat or drink anything during this hour.
- Wear clothing with sleeves that are easily rolled up.
- Inform the front clerk you have a timed test.

## **Time Required**

This will be a longer visit, so plan at least 1 hour. Results from the test are typically sent to your provider within days. Any critical results are communicated immediately by phone. Remember that no news is good news! We don't typically call if your results are normal. A hemoglobin to check for anemia and a repeat HIV are also recommended along with the gestational diabetes screening test. Please let us know if you have additional questions.

# Diagnosing Gestational Diabetes

## Three-hour Oral Glucose Tolerance Test: Diagnostic

The oral [glucose tolerance test](#) (OGTT) measures the body's ability to use a type of sugar, called glucose that is the body's main source of energy. An OGTT can be used to diagnose [prediabetes](#) and [diabetes](#). An OGTT is most commonly done to check for [diabetes](#) that occurs with [pregnancy](#) ([gestational diabetes](#)).

### Why It Is Done

The oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) is done to:

- Check pregnant women for gestational diabetes. You have an increased chance of developing gestational diabetes if you:
  - Have had gestational diabetes during a previous pregnancy.
  - Have previously given birth to a baby who weighed more than 9 lb (4.1 kg).
  - Are older than age 25, and even higher if you are 40 or older.
  - Were [overweight](#) before getting pregnant.
  - Have a first degree relative with diabetes.

### How To Prepare:

#### Glucose tolerance diagnostic test

- Eat a [balanced diet](#) that contains at least [150 grams \(g\) of carbohydrate](#) per day for 3 days before the test. Fruits, breads, cereals, grains, rice, crackers, and starchy vegetables such as potatoes, beans, and corn are good sources of carbohydrate.
- **Do not eat, drink, smoke, or [exercise](#) strenuously for at least 8 hours before your first [blood](#) sample is taken. This is a FASTING TEST!**
- Tell your doctor about all prescription and nonprescription medicines you are taking. You may be instructed to stop taking certain medicines before the test.

The glucose tolerance diagnostic test takes 4 hours. Since activity can interfere with test results, you will be asked to sit quietly during the entire test. Do not eat during the test. You may drink only water during this time. Bring a book or computer to help pass the time and plan to leave other children with a babysitter. Bring a high protein snack or meal that you can eat immediately following the last blood draw.

Talk to your provider about any concerns you have regarding the need for the test, its risks, or how it will be done.

### How It Is Done

**Glucose tolerance diagnostic test. This will be done at a regular lab, not at the office.**

On the day of testing, the following steps will be done:

- A blood sample will be collected when you arrive. This is your [fasting](#) blood glucose value. It provides a baseline for comparing other glucose values.
- You will be asked to drink a sweet liquid containing a measured amount of glucose. It is best to drink the liquid quickly. For the standard glucose tolerance test, you will drink 100 grams.
- Blood samples will be collected at timed intervals of 1, 2, and 3 hours after you drink the glucose.