

## Why have I been advised to have a Pregnancy Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (POGTT)?

### Pregnancy oral glucose tolerance test (POGTT)

For your baby to develop, your body has had to make several adjustments. One of the important adjustments is how you feed your growing baby. Pregnancy hormones from the placenta (afterbirth) change the way you use the food you eat, so both you and your baby can receive the nutrition you need.

The majority of pregnant women will adapt to this process very easily, but a few women may not, and their blood sugars may remain higher than average for pregnancy. A POGTT will help identify these women who will then be given appropriate care to ensure the pregnancy has the best outcome possible for mother and baby.

There are several groups of women that we advise to have a POGTT, for example, if you are in a susceptible ethnic group, have had sugar in your urine, have had a baby weighing over 4.5 kg, a body mass index BMI of over 30 (clinically obese) or if you have a family history of diabetes.

### What does the test involve?

This test is to check that the sugar level in your blood is not too high.

- Do not alter your diet in any way until the test results are obtained.
- Do not smoke or chew gum on the day of the test until it is completed as this may alter metabolism and affect the absorption of the glucose / test result.
- Do not eat or drink anything other than clear water from **midnight** before your test is due and **until the test is completed**.
- Sips of plain water only may be taken, if desired, throughout the test.
- A blood test will be taken on arrival, and then you will be given a glucose drink.

You will be asked to return for a blood test at two hours after having the drink. Please stay on the hospital grounds and attend for these tests on time, as late blood tests may give an inaccurate result and the test may need to be repeated. Once the test is completed you may then eat normally.

### Your appointment is booked for:

East Phlebotomy NNUH. On (dd/mm/yyyy) ..... at (24hr clock).....  
(01603 286921 Colney Lane, Norwich NR4 7UY)

Maternity Assessment Unit (MMAU) NNUH. On (dd/mm/yyyy) .....at (24hr clock).....  
(01603 287329 Colney Lane, Norwich NR4 7UY)

## **What happens next?**

If the result is abnormal, you will be contacted by phone within a week. Abnormal (high) results can indicate a condition called Gestational Diabetes. If you have this condition, more of your care will be at the hospital and you will have a follow up appointment.

## **What should I expect from this follow-up appointment?**

What we need to know next is the levels of sugar in your blood throughout the day. You will be shown how to test your blood sugar at home and given dietary advice to reduce the sugar and carbohydrate content of your diet. You will also be asked to keep a food diary for a week.

You may be asked to have a further blood test which looks at how much sugar has been in your blood for the last two to three months.

## **What does a high-test result mean?**

If the sugars in a mother's blood are higher than normal, this may mean that there are higher levels of sugar being fed to the growing baby, and, as with anyone receiving more sugar than is needed, the baby may put on weight and grow bigger than expected. This can lead to problems for both mother and baby and potentially serious health problems in later life e.g., long term diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure.

## **How common is a high-test result?**

Between 2% and 12% of pregnancies can be affected by higher sugar levels in the blood. The actual figure may vary from region to region, depending on several factors including ethnic group.

## **What can be done if I have Gestational Diabetes?**

You will need to attend for antenatal checks more frequently. This involves more scans and monitoring of your blood sugar levels.

You will be able to talk to specialist Obstetricians, Diabetes Specialist midwives and nurses and dieticians about the amount of sugar in your diet, and ways to reduce it.

This is not a slimming diet; however, you must eat healthily, so you and your baby will remain well. Some women need to use medication if diet and exercise do not bring their blood sugar levels down. This will be discussed with you by the specialist team caring for you.

Exercise is beneficial, to help with blood sugar levels. However, you should not start a 'crash' exercise program, but consider gentle exercises, such as going for a walk. You will be able to talk to the team about the right amount of exercise for you.

If you would like any further information, please contact the midwives in the Antenatal Clinic, on 01603 286795 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm).

