



Planning For Pregnancy With Type 1 Diabetes

If you have Type 1 diabetes and are planning to become pregnant, it is important to prepare ahead of time. Managing your blood sugar well before and during pregnancy helps keep both you and your baby healthy.

Why blood sugar control is important

Keeping your blood sugar in your target range is very important before pregnancy. Good management lowers the risk of problems for both you and your baby.

During pregnancy, blood sugar levels are often lower. This is because the baby uses some of your blood sugar to grow. For this reason, blood sugar targets are also lower during pregnancy.

Blood sugar targets

- Before pregnancy: Aim for an A1C of **7.0% or less**
- During pregnancy: Aim for an A1C between **6.0% and 6.5%**

Talk with your healthcare provider about your personal blood sugar targets. They can help adjust your insulin and review your time in range.

Tools that can help

A **continuous glucose monitor (CGM)** can help you track your blood sugar throughout the day and night. It can improve your time in range and help prevent low blood sugar.

Common CGMs in Canada include:

- Dexcom (www.dexcom.com)
- Libre (www.freestyle.abbott)

Insulin pumps and automated (closed-loop) systems can also help improve blood sugar control. If you want to start an insulin pump, it is best to do so before pregnancy so you feel comfortable using it.

Risks of high blood sugar

High blood sugar can lead to serious problems, including:

Early pregnancy:

- Miscarriage
- Birth defects

Later in pregnancy:

- Baby growing too large
- Breathing problems after birth
- Baby having low blood sugar after birth
- Higher risk of stillbirth

Use birth control until your blood sugar is well managed and you are ready for pregnancy.

Medications

- **Insulin is safe** to use during pregnancy
- Other diabetes medications may need to be changed or stopped

Make sure your healthcare provider reviews all your medications before pregnancy.

Other health checks

Before becoming pregnant, you should have the following checked:

- **Blood pressure**
- **Heart medications** (may need to change to safer ones)
- **Medications for nerve pain**
- **Eye health** (diabetes can affect your vision)
- **Kidney function** (blood and urine tests)

High blood sugar or high blood pressure can make eye problems worse during pregnancy.

Vitamins and nutrition

- Take **folic acid (1000 mcg)** for at least **3 months before pregnancy** and for at least 3 months after you become pregnant
- You can take this as part of a prenatal vitamin or as a supplement
- Folic acid helps prevent birth defects

1000 mcg = 1 mg

Eating regular meals with steady amounts of carbohydrates is also important. This is especially true in early pregnancy, when low blood sugar is more common.

Healthy lifestyle

- Talk with your healthcare provider about a healthy weight before pregnancy
- Follow **food safety guidelines** to avoid illness (the [HealthLink BC website](#) can be useful)

Community support

Free help is available. You can:

- Visit the [HealthLink BC website](#)
- Call **811** to speak with:
 - Nurses
 - Dietitians
 - Exercise professionals
 - Pharmacists

This information follows Diabetes Canada guidelines.

For more information: <https://www.diabetes.ca>

What to discuss with your health provider

Before pregnancy, review the following:

- Your plan and timeline for pregnancy
- Your current A1C
- Blood sugar targets
- Kidney, liver, and heart health
- Blood pressure
- Nerve health
- Eye exam
- Medications and their safety
- Folic acid and other supplements

- Healthy eating and carbohydrate intake
- Healthy weight
- Food safety
- Blood sugar monitoring tools
- Insulin pump or automated systems
- How to recognize and treat low blood sugar
- Community resources

After you become pregnant

Once you are pregnant, your care provider can refer you to the diabetes center in your community for ongoing care and support.

This information is based on **Diabetes Canada guidelines**.

For more information visit: <https://www.diabetes.ca>