

## Pregnancy - Physical Exam Before Getting Pregnant

You'll need a physical exam before you get pregnant. Your doctor will be looking for any health problems that could be a risk to your health or your baby's health. If possible, these problems should be found and treated before you get pregnant.

Share your health history with your doctor and nurse. Include:

- how well you are taking care of your diabetes
- menstrual and pregnancy history
- birth control method
- health problems (for example, kidney disease, high blood pressure, infections, other diseases)
- whether you have support from family and friends

### HEART

Pregnancy puts an extra workload on your heart. Your doctor will want to check the health of your heart and your blood pressure.

### NERVES

Your doctor should look for signs of damage to nerves (neuropathy). Such nerve damage can affect heart rate and blood pressure. Tell your doctor if you often feel dizzy when you stand up.

Nerve damage can also affect your stomach. Tell your doctor if you often feel sick to your stomach, or sometimes vomit or have diarrhea.

### KIDNEYS

In some women, kidney disease gets worse during pregnancy. Sometimes, these problems are only temporary during a pregnancy. If you have kidney problems now, pregnancy may be harder for you. Kidney disease increases the risk of high blood pressure in the second half of the pregnancy.

### EYES

See an eye doctor for a dilated eye exam. The doctor puts drops in your eyes. After a while, your pupils will be wide open. Your eye doctor then checks your eyes with a bright light.

If you have diabetic eye disease (retinopathy), have it treated before you get pregnant. Eye disease may start or get worse while you are pregnant. It can be treated during pregnancy, so keep getting eye exams while you are pregnant. After you have your baby, your eye disease will tend to go back to the level it was before you got pregnant.

### MEDICATIONS

Your doctor should review all the medications you take.

## LAB WORK

Lab tests that should be done before you get pregnant include:

### **Blood glucose control (A1C)**

A1C shows average blood glucose control. As you get ready to stop using birth control, have an A1C done every one to two months until it's normal.

### **Kidney**

Kidney function tests are routinely done before pregnancy. If you are taking an ACE inhibitor for blood pressure, you should be asked to stop taking it before these kidney tests are done.

### **Thyroid**

If you have type 1 diabetes, a blood sample is checked for thyroid problems.

## TALK ABOUT THE RESULTS

Once the exams are done and the lab work is back, you and your doctor should have a frank talk about the risks pregnancy will pose to your health, the risks to your fetus if your blood glucose levels are not in the normal range, and the work that it will take to lower these risks.