

The Risk of Diabetes and Obesity Increase with Age or Pregnancy

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Some health issues can develop at any time during your life. But the risk of being diagnosed with diabetes or becoming obese grow as you age. The risk also increases with pregnancy.

Multiple pregnancies can also add to the risk. Women are more at risk of developing both diabetes and obesity. This is linked to hereditary factors, hormones, and autoimmune diseases.

For some autoimmune diseases that can be linked to weight gain, women are a 10 to 1 higher risk than men are. This is a statistic that should cause you alarm – or at the very least, cause you to be cautious.

Pregnancy and Diabetes

Diabetes can be type I, type II or gestational. Gestational is the kind that affects pregnant women. The reason that gestational diabetes can occur during pregnancy is because of the hormonal changes that take place.

Usually, gestational diabetes will develop during the six-to-nine-month stage of the pregnancy - and this is the most common period. However, it can occur during any trimester.

When a woman becomes pregnant, her body undergoes changes that are supposed to benefit the developing baby. But the demands of the baby during the pregnancy can cause diabetes.

Your body uses glucose as fuel and it needs this fuel for all kinds of bodily functions. With gestational diabetes, the production of certain hormones causes the body's ability to handle glucose to not be as responsive to insulin.

Some doctors refer to gestational diabetes as an impaired glucose tolerance because once the pregnancy is over, the impairment *usually* goes away. During the pregnancy, however, the intolerance can reach high levels.

Since the body isn't able to correctly process the glucose, this can cause the mother-to-be to experience fatigue. This is because she's not getting the fuel - something has gone wrong in the process.

Though gestational diabetes can be common during pregnancy, there are some risks associated with having the condition. Diabetes carries a high risk of having a miscarriage.

It's also one of the leading causes for the baby to have a higher birth weight than the average baby. This higher birth rate can cause some problems during delivery - such as the baby getting stuck in the birth canal, which can lead to the need for a c-section.

The risks to a baby in the womb can include birth defects if the gestational diabetes is not properly monitored and treated.

Although there are some risks to a baby born when the mother-to-be has diabetes, such as jaundice and respiratory difficulty, the risks are not as high as they are while the baby is still in the womb.

One of the reasons that gestational diabetes can be dangerous to the baby and the mother is because there are no noticeable symptoms - especially in the first stages of the condition.

So the pregnancy can progress without treatment if the mother is not under the care of a physician. While the symptoms may not be as readily recognized, there are signs that you could be at risk for developing the condition.

These signs are: having a history of having had the condition, prior births where the baby weighed more than average, a family history of the disease unrelated to the gestational form, and obesity.

Pregnancy and Obesity

The definition for obesity means that you're carrying more weight than you should to be healthy. Obesity is not determined by a certain amount of weight, but rather how much fat you carry before it negatively affects your health.

Some women can carry more weight and have no adverse health because of it because their BMI (body mass index) level is low, while some women can carry an extra twenty pounds and their body reacts to that weight.

The standard measure for obesity is if you have a BMI that's at 30 or above. If you carry too much weight while you're pregnant, the risks to both you and the baby will rise dramatically.

Besides gestational diabetes, you can run the risk of developing conditions that can be life threatening. Being obese can cause preeclampsia. This condition can cause the blood pressure to rise in often unsafe numbers as well as causing the kidneys to spill protein.

This is known as proteinuria. One of the signs of the condition is noticeable swelling. Your ankles, legs, feet, and hands can look puffy from the fluid buildup. If the condition is not caught and treated, it can turn into eclampsia, which can be fatal.

Having a high BMI can be a sign that you're at risk of getting preeclampsia - and it's one of the biggest risks for developing it. Having diabetes, including the gestational kind as well as family history of the condition, can add to your chance of having it.

Blood clots are also more common in pregnant women who are obese. The extra weight gain from pregnancy, additional fluid, and more blood flow can increase the likelihood of having a blood clot develop.

Obesity also is a leading factor in pregnancies that go beyond the original due date. This can, in turn, cause birthing complications. Having the extra

weight is not only linked to birth defects, but it's also a contributor to stillborn births.

If you are at risk for complications during pregnancy because of your weight, you'll want to make sure that you're closely monitored by a doctor who understands the risks both to you and to the baby.

Aging and the Link to Diabetes

Diabetes is being diagnosed in more aging adults than ever before. In fact, according to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes is more prevalent in seniors than other age groups.

This condition can take a toll on not only the physical health, but mental and emotional health of a person as well. Though diabetes is one disease, there is not a one-size-fits-all treatment plan.

What works for one person will not work for the next. This is why your treatment has to be factored with your individual needs as well as the kind of lifestyle that you lead.

Having diabetes increases your risk of developing other age related diseases and it needs to be monitored to keep the side effects of the disease as low as possible.

Just being diagnosed with diabetes doesn't mean that you'll automatically face some of the physical problems linked with it. You can fight back. One of the first steps you can do is to make sure that you pay attention to your glucose numbers.

You need a good monitor - having two is a good idea. You can keep one at home and one at work or in your car. Check your glucose levels two hours from the start of when you began to eat.

The number should be less than 180, but lower is even better. This shows how your body is processing the glucose and turning it into fuel. People who have diabetes often struggle with feeling tired because their cells aren't getting the proper amount of fuel from the glucose.

Instead, it remains in the bloodstream. You should get your A1C level checked every three months. This will show how well your body is working to control the level of glucose.

The higher the number, the more at risk of complications that you are. This test can be a gauge to determine if there are any changes that can be made that can keep you healthier.

Blood pressure is something else that you'll need to watch out for when you have diabetes because high blood pressure is commonly associated with the disease. Long term high blood pressure can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Your cholesterol level should also be routinely checked. People with diabetes often tend to have higher cholesterol levels, which contributes to heart disease.

The most widely known symptoms of this disease are thirst, hunger that's above what you normally feel, going to the bathroom more often - having to get up in the middle of the night to urinate can be a sign.

Other signs are vision problems, thirst and feeling tingling in your fingers that feel like a pins and needles sensation. You can have the same sensation in your lips. Headaches, often severe, are common, too.

Having wounds or infections that take a long time to heal is also a sign of the condition. Feeling as if you need to take a nap is a sign that many aging people mistakenly attribute to growing older.

As the disease progresses untreated and the numbers become very high, it can lead to sudden and dramatic weight loss. At this stage, there is an acute risk of diabetic coma.

Aging and Obesity

Being obese is the number one reason that aging people get diabetes. Not only is it the cause, but carrying too much weight can also make it

more difficult to manage the diabetes and get the glucose numbers into a healthy range.

Obesity causes the accelerated aging of adipose tissue. This is known as body fat and it's a connective tissue. While you might think of it as just fat, this tissue actually works very hard for your body.

It works to help the energy release that your body needs to function properly. It also works in hormone production. This tissue is instrumental in helping with hormones related to sex, blood pressure, insulin sensitivity and blood clotting.

Just like too little of this tissue (like you see in some health conditions such as anorexia) can be dangerous to your health, so can too much of it.

Too much adipose tissue equals obesity and makes it more difficult for your body to use the glucose because your organs and cells can't work the way they should.

Obesity can also accelerate aging. There is also an increased risk of dementia associated with obesity. Gallstones are more common. So is back pain because of the pressure the weight puts on the spine.

Ulcers are more common with obesity and aging as well. Besides heart disease and cancer, obesity carries an elevated risk of developing cancer as you age. Women are at greater risk of developing cancer as they age if they're obese.

Obesity has an incredibly high rate of cancer occurrences in older people. The risk of being diagnosed with cancer as you age leaps to fifty percent. As you age, your cells do, too.

In some people, the rate at which the cells age is slow. This is why you can see people in their seventies and older who look like they're in their fifties or sixties. One of the leading causes of cells aging rapidly is obesity.

This is due to the fat that occurs with excess weight. The fat speeds up the destruction of the cells' makeup. This process can make a person look anywhere from ten to twenty years older than what they are.

Your fat cells are responsible for making your body age faster than it normally would if you didn't have the extra weight.

Lowering Your Risk Factors for Diabetes and Obesity

While you can't change your family history of diabetes or obesity, you can know the risk factors that will affect your own health. By knowing what your risks are, you can make preventative changes.

Or, if you already have diabetes or are obese, you can become proactive. By becoming proactive, you can often reverse the damaging health effects of both conditions.

First, get rid of any bad habits that can complicate either. This could be habits such as smoking or other addictions. If you're not exercising, you need to start. Exercise can promote weight loss and it can also help control glucose levels.

If you are exercising already, make sure that you haven't fallen into a routine that doesn't challenge your body to its optimal performance. Take an honest look at the foods that you're putting into your body.

While it's true that there are health conditions aside from overeating that can cause both diabetes and obesity, the majority of the cases are caused by too much food.

If your main food sources are high fat foods, sugary foods, carbs and fast foods, then you have to make some changes in order to change your long-term health. If your diet is a problem, make small changes toward healthier foods rather than big changes.

This way, it won't feel like you're depriving yourself. Don't fall for any fad diets. These can have some negative and even dangerous

consequences. Choose instead a healthy way of eating that focuses on lean meats, vegetables and fruits and whole grains.

Get a BMI screening test as well as a blood glucose test.

This will show you where you currently stand with either condition. If you want to lose weight to help control the risk of diabetes, or to manage it if you already have it, don't constantly focus on the scale or how much you need to lose.

Instead, focus on eating healthy, exercising and one week at a time. You don't have to constantly worry about it, but regularly check in with your health to ensure you're not inching closer to either condition.



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