

Gestational Diabetes 3-Hour Glucose Tolerance Test

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that can happen to those who are pregnant. You will have gestational diabetes screening between 24 to 28 weeks of your pregnancy.

If you have any questions, please talk with your care team.

The glucose tolerance test (GTT) is a blood test that shows how well your body processes sugar. High blood glucose (blood sugar) levels may mean you have gestational diabetes.

It is important to treat gestational diabetes to avoid health problems.

Why you may need the 3-hour GTT

A positive (high blood glucose level) result on the 1-hour GTT or an elevated hemoglobin A1C does not mean that you have gestational diabetes. Your care team will order a 3-hour GTT for further testing. This test helps them decide if you have gestational diabetes or not. This test takes longer than the 1st GTT screening.

How to take the 3-hour GTT

You must fast for 8 hours before taking the 3-hour GTT.

You will come to one of the Northwestern Memorial Hospital laboratory testing clinics to have the test.

The care team will take 4 blood samples from you over the course of the test. They will take the 1st blood sample while you have been fasting, which means you did not eat or drink anything (besides water) for at least 8 to 10 hours. Then, they will give you a sugar solution to drink. After you finish the drink, the care team will draw your blood samples at timed intervals of 1, 2 and 3 hours.

What you need to do

- Eat your normal diet for the 3 days before the test.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke or exercise for at least 8 to 10 hours before the test. You can drink plain water.
- This test may take up to 4 hours. You will need to stay within the lab area for the duration of the test since activity can affect the results.
- You can bring something to read, your tablet or a project to work on while waiting.
- You may drink plain water during the testing process. Do not eat any food or snacks during the test.

- Some people may feel nauseated, light-headed, or sweaty during the testing process. If you do not feel well, let the care team know right away.
- Once the care team draws the last blood sample, you may eat and drink. You will be very hungry at this point, so bring a light snack (crackers, cheese, granola bar). You should eat something before you leave the clinic or drive.

The care team will call you if the test results are abnormal.

To learn more

If you have any questions about the 3-hour GTT, ask your care team.

To learn more about gestational diabetes, go to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) website at acog.org/womens-health/faqs/gestational-diabetes.

Laboratory testing locations and hours

Northwestern Medicine offers several locations for outpatient laboratory services.

To learn more about draw sites, addresses and scheduling options, go to:

nm.org/conditions-and-care-areas/lab-services > Areas of Care > Outpatient Lab Draw

