



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Gestational Diabetes Means Lifelong Risk

(NAPSA)—Gestational diabetes is diabetes that is found for the first time when a woman is pregnant. It puts a woman at high risk for developing diabetes in the future. Diabetes means that your blood glucose (also called blood sugar) is too high. It can lead to serious lifelong health problems, such as heart disease, blindness and amputations. If left untreated or uncontrolled, it can lead to problems for the mom and her baby.

Fortunately, modest but important steps can lower the risk for developing diabetes, while helping to keep the whole family healthy.

“Women with a history of gestational diabetes can lower their risk for developing diabetes by making an effort to reach and maintain a healthy weight, making healthy food choices, and being active for at least 30 minutes, five days a week,” according to Judith Fradkin, M.D., of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. “Keeping a healthy lifestyle as a family is good for everyone.”

Women who have had gestational diabetes need to be tested for diabetes six to 12 weeks after their baby is born and at least every three years after that. Mothers should let their doctor—and their child’s doctor—know about their history of gestational diabetes.

For example, Holly Romans was diagnosed with gestational diabetes when she was pregnant with her first child. After the baby was born, a blood test showed Romans’ blood glucose was back to normal, so she thought there was nothing to worry about. But a follow-up test showed her headed toward a diagnosis of diabetes. She shared this information with her daughter’s doctor and a note was made in her daughter’s health record. Romans joined a diabetes preven-



**Women like Holly who have had gestational diabetes need to be tested for diabetes after their baby is born.**

tion program at a local hospital and learned how to keep a healthy lifestyle for herself and her family. She lost weight by making small changes in her daily routine, such as replacing chocolate snack cakes with fresh fruit, preparing more salads, eating smaller portions, and taking daily walks. In just a few months, Romans’ glucose levels had improved so much that she was no longer in the “danger zone” for diabetes. And thanks to her lifestyle changes, she did not develop gestational diabetes when she became pregnant with her second child.

Today, Romans continues to get tested for diabetes at least every three years. She makes sure she and her family maintain a healthy lifestyle by staying physically active and making healthy food choices.

For a free tip sheet for women with a history of gestational diabetes, including steps to reduce the risk of developing diabetes, call the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) at 1-888-693-NDEP (6337) or visit [www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org).