Committed to Women, Devoted to Health.
Meriter knows that the health needs of women are unique, whether they are working toward maximum fitness, beginning motherhood or battling illness. That’s why we have developed specific programs and services for women across the lifespan. After your baby’s birth, we encourage you to continue to rely on Meriter’s expertise for the needs of you and your family.

Why Is Diabetes Pre-Pregnancy Counseling Important?
Having a baby and deciding to become a parent is a big decision. Most women with diabetes can have healthy babies, but it’s important to get the facts in order to reduce the risk of problems and anticipate the demands of a high-risk pregnancy. Learning about the care that is involved for diabetes during pregnancy can help women make informed decisions about when to have a baby, how to plan for a healthy pregnancy, and what to expect during pregnancy.

What is Pre-pregnancy Counseling?
• Talking with your primary care doctor/endocrinologist about diabetes and your desire for pregnancy or contraception
• Working with a team of diabetes specialists who are knowledgeable about diabetes and pregnancy care
• Talking with your doctor about health risks for you and your baby
• Planning the best time to have a baby

How Does High Blood Glucose Before and During Pregnancy Affect Your Baby?
When a mother’s blood glucose is high, her baby is at risk for:
• Birth defects, especially of the heart and spine
• Miscarriage or stillbirth
• Abnormally small or large in size
• Too much amniotic fluid, which can cause discomfort and lead to preterm labor
• Jaundice
• Problems controlling glucose and electrolyte levels
• Problems breathing after birth

How Can Diabetes Affect the Mother During Pregnancy?
• Diabetes damages blood vessels in the eyes, kidneys, etc. If diabetes has damaged eyes or kidneys before pregnancy, these problems may get worse with pregnancy.
• Diabetes also puts women at risk for high blood pressure during pregnancy.
• Women with type 1 diabetes are at a higher risk for developing diabetes ketoacidosis during pregnancy.
Learning about the care that is involved for diabetes during pregnancy can help women make informed decisions.

What Can You Do Before Pregnancy to Decrease Your Risks?

- See a specialist who is experienced with diabetes and pregnancy care.
- Do not become pregnant until your blood glucose is well-controlled (check with your provider regarding specific glucose and A1c goals).
- Make sure you’ve had a complete physical, dental exam, dilated eye exam and kidney screening in the last year.
- Monitor blood glucose before and either 1 or 2 hours after meals.
- Switch to medications that are suitable for pregnancy; this may mean switching from diabetes pills to insulin.
- Take prenatal vitamins when you decide to try to become pregnant.
- Stop smoking, consuming alcohol, or using recreational drugs.
- Share what you have learned with family and friends.

What other kind of information will I need to know?

- When and where to obtain care during pregnancy
- What to expect when you have diabetes and are pregnant
- Changes involved with caring for your diabetes during pregnancy, managing morning sickness, etc.
- Nutritional needs, weight gain goals, exercise recommendations
- Changing medications for pregnancy
- Increasing frequency of doctor and other medical appointments, including ultrasounds and other diagnostic tests
- Have your A1c—measured every three to six months (recommended A1c goal when not pregnant is 6.5 or less).
- See your dentist twice a year.
- Exercise and eat healthy.
- Stop smoking cigarettes and/or using recreational drugs; use alcohol with caution and discuss the guidelines for this with your healthcare provider.
- Do your best to find coping mechanisms to handle stress and lead a happy, balanced life.

Take The Next Step

The Center for Perinatal Care at Meriter Hospital helps women greatly reduce the risk of problems during pregnancy. We recommend prepregnancy counseling for all women with diabetes that is preexisting including prediabetes, type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes and cystic fibrosis related diabetes. Improving glucose control to normal levels and other preconceptional (pre-pregnancy) care helps to decrease risk for miscarriage and birth defects associated with diabetes.

Our diabetes and pregnancy program team consists of maternal fetal medicine doctors, nurses, a diabetes nurse specialist, dietitian, social worker and others who can assist you in having a healthy pregnancy and baby. Our diabetes self-management education program is dedicated to helping you obtain your goals.

If you decide not to become pregnant at this time

Remember that it is always important to take care of your diabetes!

- Find out about contraception and what to do if an unplanned pregnancy occurs.
- Have a complete physical each year, along with diabetes screenings of the eyes, kidney, and cholesterol levels.
- See your doctor at least twice each year for diabetes care.

If you are interested in having diabetes prepregnancy counseling contact your doctor for a referral to Meriter Hospital’s Center for Perinatal Care 202 South Park St., Madison, WI 53715 or 608-417-6667.

The Meriter Diabetes Self-Management Program has been Recognized by the American Diabetes Association for Quality Self-Management Education.*

*The American Diabetes Association Recognizes the education service as meeting the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education.