

Help us find better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat preeclampsia and gestational diabetes during pregnancy.

“If preeclampsia and gestational diabetes could be prevented, then two of the strongest risk factors for women’s heart disease could be prevented or reduced. That is an important long-term goal for women’s health.” Prof Annemarie Hennessy, internationally renowned preeclampsia researcher and HRI research group leader.



What is preeclampsia?

Preeclampsia is a dangerous pregnancy condition. Usually diagnosed at around the 20-week mark, it is thought to occur when blood vessels in the placenta have not formed properly, and toxic proteins are released into the mother’s bloodstream. This damages the blood vessels, which leads to high blood pressure and can interrupt the blood supply from mother to baby.

What are the risks for mothers and babies?

Preeclampsia can put the mother at risk of brain injury, and impair liver and kidney function. It can also cause serious blood-clotting and fluid on the lungs.

For babies, preeclampsia can lead to premature birth. It can also cause the baby to be underweight.

When untreated, preeclampsia can be fatal for both mothers and babies. It also significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular disease later in life.

How will my gift help?

Professor Hennessy and her research team have made promising discoveries on how to safely prolong pregnancies, to give both babies and mothers a better chance of surviving preeclampsia - without developing long-term health problems. Your kind donation will help build on this important milestone on the journey towards finding a way to prevent preeclampsia.

What is gestational diabetes?

Diabetes occurs when the body's cells become resistant to insulin, a hormone that moves glucose (sugar) from your blood to your body's cells. In pregnancy, hormones from the placenta can cause the cells to become insulin resistant. Normally the body produces more insulin to deal with this, but when it doesn't the mother develops gestational diabetes. The condition can cause excess sugars and fats to cross the placenta to the baby.

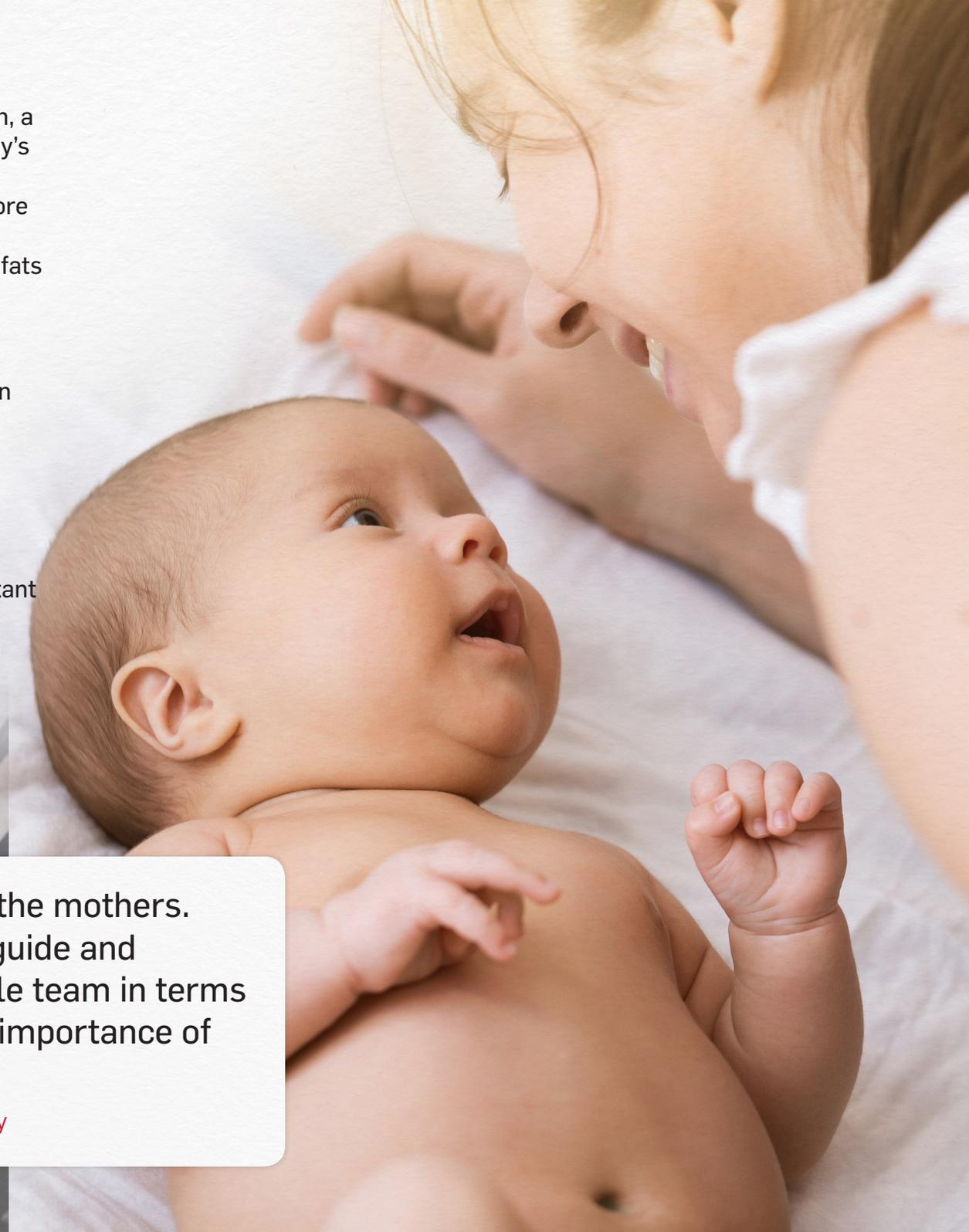
What are the risks for mothers and babies?

Gestational diabetes can often make babies grow large, which can lead to problems with childbirth.

Both babies and mothers face a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

How will my gift help?

Your gift today can support the Heart Research Institute's important research looking at how testing women within two years after the birth of their child for sugar levels can support treatment and prevent future cardiovascular disease.



“My inspiration is the mothers. They continue to guide and motivate the whole team in terms of the immediate importance of the work we do.”

Prof Annemarie Hennessy