Gestational diabetes

It is estimated that about 4 million women are affected by GDM in India. Awareness needs to be raised about its symptoms, treatment and management.

New Delhi, Dec 12, 2016: Around their 24th week of pregnancy, many women tend to develop diabetes mellitus and it is called Gestational Diabetes mellitus (GDM). Women who have never had diabetes throughout their life can also have high blood sugar during pregnancy. According to the center for disease control, the worldwide prevalence of diabetes is about 9.2% while in India, prevalence rates range from 35-41%.

While the exact cause of GDM remains yet to be known, it is hypothesized that placental hormonal imbalance plays a major role in its development. Insulin resistance and consequent hyperglycemia (high blood glucose) resulting from this hormonal imbalance can lead to the development of GDM.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr. K.K Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and National President Elect Indian Medical Association (IMA), stated that, “Considering the high prevalence rates, especially in north India, the urgency of awareness regarding GDM can not be overlooked. It is important that GDM be identifies, treated and managed on time to prevent harmful health related outcomes. Immediate maternal outcomes due to GDM include preeclampsia, stillbirths, macrosomia, and need for cesarean section while neonatal outcomes are hypoglycemia and respiratory distress. It also increases the risk of future Type 2 diabetes in mother and the baby. “

The treatment for gestational diabetes is aimed at keeping blood glucose levels equal to the physiological levels seen during pregnancy. Special meal plans and scheduled physical activity are the mainstay of treatment and management approaches along with daily blood glucose monitoring and insulin injections.

“Gestational diabetes can best be managed with healthy eating and regular physical activity. However, for some women, insulin injections might be advised for the rest of the pregnancy. Approximately 10 – 20% of women will need insulin; until the baby is born to ensure safety for both the mother and the baby. In most cases, gestational diabetes usually resolves after childbirth. Oral glucose tolerance test is ordered after delivery to rule out any abnormal glucose levels. This being said, GDM is associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes later in life and it is advised top get tested every 2-3 years. The same applies for the child and tests are recommended usually around adolescence.”, added Dr. Aggarwal.

After childbirth, while GDM usually resolves however, it still warrants that the mother stay vigilant about her chances of developing Type 2 diabetes mellitus. Follow a healthy diet plan with optimal amounts of dietary fiber, natural sweeteners and micronutrients. Avoid processed and canned products. Physical activity of at least 30 minutes per day is advised. Moreover, stay up to date on important health numbers like blood glucose, cholesterol levels and blood pressure. The same applies to the child, allow a healthy and active lifestyle from early life. In subsequent pregnancies, the risks associated with GDM might be
increased so, it is best to follow up with a physician to access your risks and the best ways towards management.

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About Heart Care Foundation of India

Initiated in 1986, the Heart Care Foundation of India is a leading National NGO working in the field of creating mass health awareness among people from all walks of life and providing solutions for India's everyday healthcare needs. The NGO uses consumer-based entertainment modules to impart health education and increase awareness amongst people. A leading example of this is the Perfect Health Mela; an annual event started in 1993 that is attended by over 2-3 lakh people each year. The Mela showcases activities across categories such as health education seminars and check-ups, entertainment programs, lifestyle exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and competitions. In addition to this, the NGO conducts programs and camps to train people on the technique of hands only CPR through its CPR 10 mantra for revival after a sudden cardiac arrest. They currently hold three Limca book of world records for the maximum number of people trained in hands-only CPR in one go. Keeping article 21 of the Indian Constitution in mind, which guarantees a person Right to Life, Heart Care Foundation of India has also recently initiated a project called the Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund to ensure that no one dies of a heart disease just because they cannot afford treatment.

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