

Support your female patients of reproductive age who have been diagnosed with diabetes

South Western Sydney has a congenital malformation rate almost six times higher than the NSW average. Here is how to find and support your at-risk patients.

A major factor causing congenital malformation is poor glycaemic control in pregnant women with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, followed by the use of potentially fetotoxic medications and insufficient folic acid supplementation.

Current guidelines recommend a HbA1c of 6.5% or below for at least three months before a patient tries to conceive.

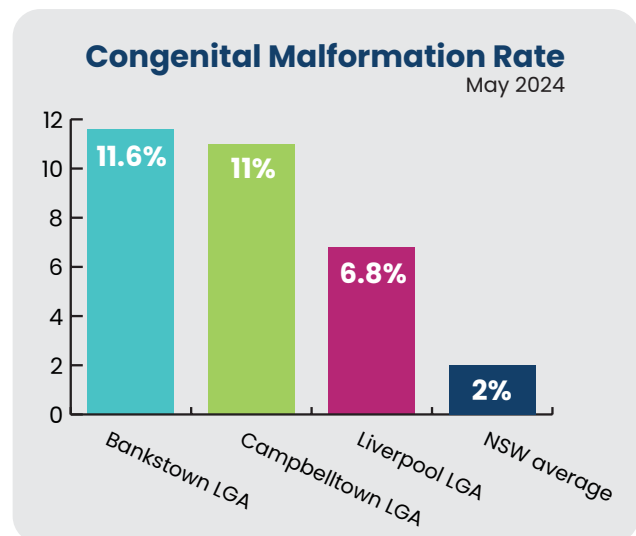
Women with a HbA1c above 7.5% are nine times more likely to have congenital malformation, and four times more likely to miscarry than those who have a HbA1c of 6.5% or less.

Managing the risks of unplanned pregnancies

For women with pre-existing diabetes, understanding and managing the risks of unplanned pregnancies, undertaking pre-pregnancy planning and maintaining glycaemic control before and throughout pregnancy can significantly increase the likelihood of having a healthy baby.

SWSPHN recommends practices have routine conversations with all of their female patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes who are of child-bearing age to discuss whether they are planning on becoming pregnant in the near future.

See overleaf for clinical resources, including referral recommendations.



Support for your practice

Throughout 2024, SWSPHN offers to visit practices across South Western Sydney to initiate a recall process.

We will run a POLAR report of patients diagnosed with diabetes who are of childbearing age. This report will help develop a recall list, enabling you to engage these patients in discussions about pre-pregnancy planning and contraception.

Contact Alyssa Horgan for bookings and enquiries.

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South Western Sydney PHN (SWSPHN) is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government. This consultation is offered free of charge to eligible practices as part of SWSPHN's commitment to quality care by supporting health professionals in delivering essential healthcare and contributing to the health and wellbeing of our community.

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How you can support your patients

Patients who have become pregnant

Patients should be referred to a specialist diabetes in pregnancy clinic as early as possible upon confirmation of pregnancy (before 10 weeks gestation). This is in addition to the usual referral to the antenatal clinic.

Diabetes in pregnancy clinic referral details available through HealthPathways:

[sws.communityhealthpathways.org](https://www.sws.communityhealthpathways.org)

> *SEARCH FOR: pre-pregnancy planning for type 1 and type 2 diabetes*

Patient is thinking about becoming pregnant or actively trying to become pregnant

It is recommended to provide specialist, multi-disciplinary support to achieve optimal glycaemic control.

Diabetes specific pre-pregnancy counselling and management has been shown to reduce both the congenital malformation rate and perinatal mortality by 50-75% in women with both T1DM and T2DM.

You can refer them to one of the **SWSLHD Diabetes Contraception and Pre-Pregnancy Planning (DCAPP) Clinics** (located at Bankstown, Liverpool and Campbelltown) for support.

Referral details available through HealthPathways:

[sws.communityhealthpathways.org](https://www.sws.communityhealthpathways.org)

> *SEARCH FOR: pre-pregnancy planning for type 1 and type 2 diabetes*

DCAPP clinics are also able to support women who are not planning to become pregnant but are unsure of contraception despite being sexually active. Their specialists and counsellors can discuss the potential risks of unplanned pregnancy and support the women in accessing contraception if they choose to.

Patient not planning to become pregnant

Consider discussing contraception options to avoid unplanned pregnancy with your patient. Long acting reversible contraceptions (LARCs) are recommended.

Clinical guidance on contraception details available through HealthPathways:

[sws.communityhealthpathways.org](https://www.sws.communityhealthpathways.org)

> *SEARCH FOR: Contraception options*

Patients wanting more information

Access patient resources for pre-pregnancy planning, contraception and diabetes in pregnancy through Health Resource Directory: **[healthresourcedirectory.org.au](https://www.healthresourcedirectory.org.au)**

Consider printing a factsheet for your patient via 'For Patient' link on HealthPathways or refer your patient to the Health Resource Directory website to choose information in English, Arabic, simplified Chinese or Vietnamese in print and audio formats.

Register or login to HealthPathways

From your web browser, go to:

[sws.communityhealthpathways.org](https://www.sws.communityhealthpathways.org)

