

## **Briefing: Healthier You NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme: expansion of eligibility to include normoglycaemic women with previous gestational diabetes**

Every year in England, of the approximate 700,000 women who give birth, it is estimated that around 30,000 have Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM).

Women who are at increased risk of developing GDM include those who are overweight, have a family history of diabetes, have had a large baby in a previous pregnancy (4.5kg/10lb or more) or are from a South Asian, Black or African Caribbean or Middle Eastern background.

The longer-term risks associated with a history of GDM mean that these women are at a much higher likelihood of developing Type 2 diabetes, particularly within the first 3-6 years after having GDM. Although limited, research shows that interventions based on diet and lifestyle may have a role in improving long-term outcomes of women with previous GDM by preventing the development of Type 2 diabetes.

The eligibility criteria for the Healthier You NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme are therefore being expanded to include women with a past diagnosis of GDM and normoglycaemia (HbA1c < 42 mmol/mol or Fasting Plasma Glucose < 5.5 mmol/l). This will allow this cohort of women to have access to an evidence-based programme designed to support them in making lasting lifestyle changes and reducing their risk of Type 2 diabetes. Women with non-diabetic hyperglycaemia (HbA1c 42-47 mmol/mol or Fasting Plasma Glucose 5.5-6.9 mmol/l), with or without a prior history of GDM, are already eligible for referral to Healthier You.

Alongside annual glycaemic reviews and audits of GP systems, the 6-8 week postnatal check included in the GP contract from April 2020 is opportune for discussing future risk of Type 2 diabetes and offering referral to the Healthier You programme for those who are eligible (requires the results of a post-natal glycaemic check to be available).

Following a review of the programme structure and content, no specific changes have been required. However, where barriers in accessing lifestyle interventions for this group have largely related to childcare and other commitments, it is expected that the remote and digital service delivery of Healthier You will overcome some of the challenges usually associated with face to face delivery.

To support engagement with key stakeholders, please see the set of FAQs below. Further information or questions should be directed to [england.ndpp@nhs.net](mailto:england.ndpp@nhs.net).

# **Healthier You NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme: expansion of eligibility to include normoglycaemic women with previous gestational diabetes**

## **FAQs for Healthcare Professionals**

### **1. How has eligibility for the programme changed?**

Women with a history of gestational diabetes (GDM) and non-diabetic hyperglycaemia (NDH) have been able to access the programme from the outset; we are now expanding eligibility to also include women with a history of GDM and normoglycaemia (FPG < 5.5mmol/l or HbA1c < 42 mmol/mol).

Referrals to Healthier You must include glycaemic test results. The timeframe for eligibility based on these results will be consistent with eligibility for people with NDH (expanded from 12 months to 24 months until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 due to the pandemic; a decision on further extension is due to be taken imminently).

### **2. Why has this change occurred?**

Women with a history of GDM have an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Research shows that key barriers to participation in lifestyle-related interventions for this group include childcare and other priorities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme introduced a remote service for participants alongside the existing digital offer; this presents further opportunity to support this group with making lasting lifestyle changes with the removal of the barriers associated with face-to-face service delivery.

### **3. How can this cohort be referred into the programme?**

There are a number of key touchpoints that offer the opportunity to identify and refer this group into the Healthier You programme.

A 6-8 week post-natal review has been incorporated in GP contracts since April 2020. This appointment is opportune for reviewing the results of a postnatal glycaemic check (i.e. a FPG at 6 weeks) in women with presumed gestational

diabetes. In those who have non-diabetic hyperglycaemia or normoglycaemia at this check, referral to the Healthier You programme should be offered.

At the post-natal check, arrangements should also be made for yearly follow-up with a glycaemic check, as recommended in NICE NG3. The yearly glycaemic check provides another opportunity to refer non-diabetic women with a history of GDM (who may have normoglycaemia or NDH) to the Healthier You programme.

In addition to the opportunistic offer of referral to those who are eligible, women with a history of GDM with non-diabetic blood results within the relevant timeframe could be identified through systematic searches of clinical systems and offered referral to the Healthier You programme as appropriate.

#### **4. What happens if challenges with phlebotomy or pathology services mean that a FPG result is not available at the postnatal review?**

In circumstances where test results are not available at the time of the postnatal review appointment, it is important that the GP practice arranges a glycaemic test (FPG until 13 weeks post-natal, thereafter HbA1c may be used) and reviews the results. Particular care should be taken to review the result in the context of the availability of the Healthier You programme to normoglycaemic women with previous gestational diabetes (i.e. to avoid the result being filed as normal without further action being taken in offering a referral to Healthier You).

Referrals must include a blood test result in order to be accepted by the Provider.

#### **5. How should GP practices code this in the clinical record?**

If not already recorded, a history of gestational diabetes should be coded as 'History of gestational diabetes mellitus' (SNOMED 472971004).

Referral to Healthier You should be coded as 'Referral to NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme' (SNOMED 1025251000000107).

## **6. Do I use the same referral form?**

Referral forms for the programme are being updated to include eligibility for normoglycaemic women with a history of gestational diabetes.

It is crucial that referrals sent for women with normoglycaemia indicate the history of gestational diabetes to the Provider (i.e. the appropriate box is ticked).

## **7. How do I refer someone with both a history of gestational diabetes and recent blood results showing non-diabetic hyperglycaemia?**

Women with non-diabetic hyperglycaemia, with or without a history of gestational diabetes, have always been eligible for Healthier You and can be referred in the usual way. It is not absolutely necessary to indicate on the referral that they have a history of gestational diabetes.

## **8. Do I need to make amendments to letter templates to support mail outs?**

If sending mail outs to women with a history of gestational diabetes and normoglycaemia, existing letter templates which refer to raised glycaemic results on blood tests should not be used. An additional letter template may be needed for this cohort.

## **9. Can women with a history of gestational diabetes refer themselves onto the programme?**

As with people with NDH, it is recommended that women with previous gestational diabetes and normoglycaemia are referred to Healthier You by General Practice.

At the time of writing, a temporary direct-to-consumer (self-referral) pathway is available for Healthier You via the [Diabetes UK Know Your Risk tool](#). However, many women with previous gestational diabetes will not be eligible for the programme through this route as they must score at or above a risk threshold (which does not take into account a history of gestational diabetes).

## **10. Is this addition to eligibility permanent?**

It is expected that this change to the eligibility criteria for Healthier You will be permanently established.

## **11. Are any changes being made to the delivery of the Healthier You Programme for this cohort?**

No adjustments to the content or structure of the existing Healthier You programme are being made at this time for this cohort. This may be reviewed in the future.

Depending on operational factors, Healthier You providers may arrange specific groups for this cohort to facilitate peer support.

The programme is being delivered entirely remotely or digitally at present and is anticipated to continue having a digital option when face-to-face services resume.

Please let eligible women know that they are welcome to 'bring' their family (including babies) to remote sessions and they will be supported in making adjustments (such as turning off their video as required) to suit their needs.

## **12. How long do women with previous GDM and normoglycaemia remain eligible for Healthier You?**

There is no limit on the timeframe for eligibility following a previous diagnosis of GDM – a woman remains eligible as long as she has not developed Type 2 diabetes and continues to have a blood test result within the normoglycaemic range within the applicable timeframe.

The timeframe for blood results has been expanded from 12 months to 24 months until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 due to the pandemic; a decision on further extension is due to be taken imminently.

Should any woman from this eligible cohort wish to delay their referral into the Healthier You programme for practical or personal reasons, she should be advised that she will remain eligible based on her most recent blood test for the applicable timeframe.