

Diabetics less likely to get contraceptive services, study finds

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Women with diabetes are less likely than women without chronic diseases to get contraceptive counseling or use reversible contraceptives, according to a study led by a University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine researcher that was published online in the [Journal of General Internal Medicine](#). The study's authors say family planning services are critical for diabetic women because diabetics who become pregnant when their blood sugar is uncontrolled have an increased risk of birth defects.

The study also found that diabetic [women](#) are more likely to be surgically sterilized than similarly aged women without chronic conditions. This finding highlights the need for diabetic women to receive more information about highly effective contraceptives, such as intrauterine devices (IUDs), said the study's lead author, Eleanor Bimla Schwarz, M.D., University of Pittsburgh associate professor of medicine, epidemiology, gynecology and reproductive sciences and a UPMC physician. Such contraceptives allow women time to control their blood sugars and increase the chance a woman will have a healthy baby when she wants one.

Researchers examined the medical records of 8,182 insured women with diabetes and 122,921 insured women who had no chronic conditions between January 2006 and June 2007. More than half, or 52 percent, of the women with diabetes had not received any [contraceptive](#) services compared to 38 percent of women without chronic conditions.

"Many clinicians remain unaware of the range of contraceptive options that can be safely used when diabetes complicates a woman's life. Just because diabetic women can't take birth control pills doesn't mean that surgical sterilization is their only choice," said Dr. Schwarz, also an investigator at the Magee-Womens Research Institute. "IUDs, for example, are a great choice for women with [diabetes](#). They are super-safe, as effective as having your tubes tied and are reversible."

Provided by UPMC

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