

# BHARTI VERMA:

TWO PREGNANCIES, TWO DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

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HOSHANGABAD, MADHYA PRADESH



When 20 year old Bharti Verma conceived for the first time, wanting the best for her and her yet to be born baby, her husband—a daily wage laborer—spared no expense and took her to a private clinic. There, she was diagnosed with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)—a condition with high blood sugar which is first recognized during pregnancy. Bharti and her family did not understand much of what that meant but followed the doctor's instructions. The physician started her on insulin therapy. But not adjusting her dose to contain her blood sugar levels within safe limits, her sugar levels remained high through most of her pregnancy. Her condition deteriorated and she needed to be referred to a higher level facility in the state's capital, Bhopal. It was a difficult delivery—Bharti delivered pre-term through a caesarean section. Her baby girl had to be hospitalized right after birth as the doctors found a hole in her heart.

**AS PER THE NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR DIAGNOSIS & MANAGEMENT OF GDM (DEC 2014), UNDIAGNOSED OR INADEQUATELY TREATED GDM CAN LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT MATERNAL AND FETAL COMPLICATIONS, INCLUDING CONGENITAL MALFORMATION IN THE INFANT.**



One and a half years later, Bharti conceived again. The family, still burdened with the debt they accrued during her first pregnancy, decided to visit the District Hospital- Hoshangabad, a government hospital where her maternity care would be free. Yet again, she tested positive for GDM. But, as Bharti recalls, things felt different this time.



When Ms. Manjula, the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), diagnosed Bharti with GDM using a single step oral glucose tolerance test, she along with the nutrition expert, Ms. Swati Dubey, counseled Bharti, explaining in detail the meaning of her condition. They asked her to follow a specific kind of diet as prescribed in the Medical Nutrition Therapy of the National GDM Guidelines. They also gave her some simple physical exercises which would further help in controlling her blood sugar levels. The ANM also referred her to Dr. Jitendra More, Medical Officer, who prescribed a dose of insulin and adjusted the dose regularly, keeping a close vigil on her sugar levels throughout her pregnancy. Ms. Hemlata Sangiya, Staff Nurse, taught Bharti the step-by-step technique of injecting the insulin using a job aid. This committed team of providers, who provided medical treatment along with lifestyle modification counselling, helped Bharti wade through her second pregnancy smoothly, with her blood sugar levels well under control. Bharti gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

Bharti talks about the difference in her experience during her two pregnancies—“Due to the GDM program in my district, I was saved a lot of trouble. During my first pregnancy, I had to go to a private provider, where my family had to spend a lot of money on blood investigations and treatment, and even then my sugar levels were not in control. I think my elder daughter suffers from this disease because of my uncontrolled sugar levels.”



Bharti is one of more than thirty thousand pregnant women in Hoshangabad who are benefitting from this program. So far, 11,403 pregnant women have been screened for GDM at least once and 877 (7.7 %) of them have tested positive for GDM. These women are being cared for by a team of trained providers who are working diligently to ensure that neither these women nor their newborns suffer due to uncontrolled sugar levels during pregnancy.