



A bitter pill during pregnancy

The bun in the oven bakes a little differently for pregnant women with diabetes.

Nompumelelo Malaza is a PhD student at the University of Pretoria specialising in epigenetics and diabetes during pregnancy.



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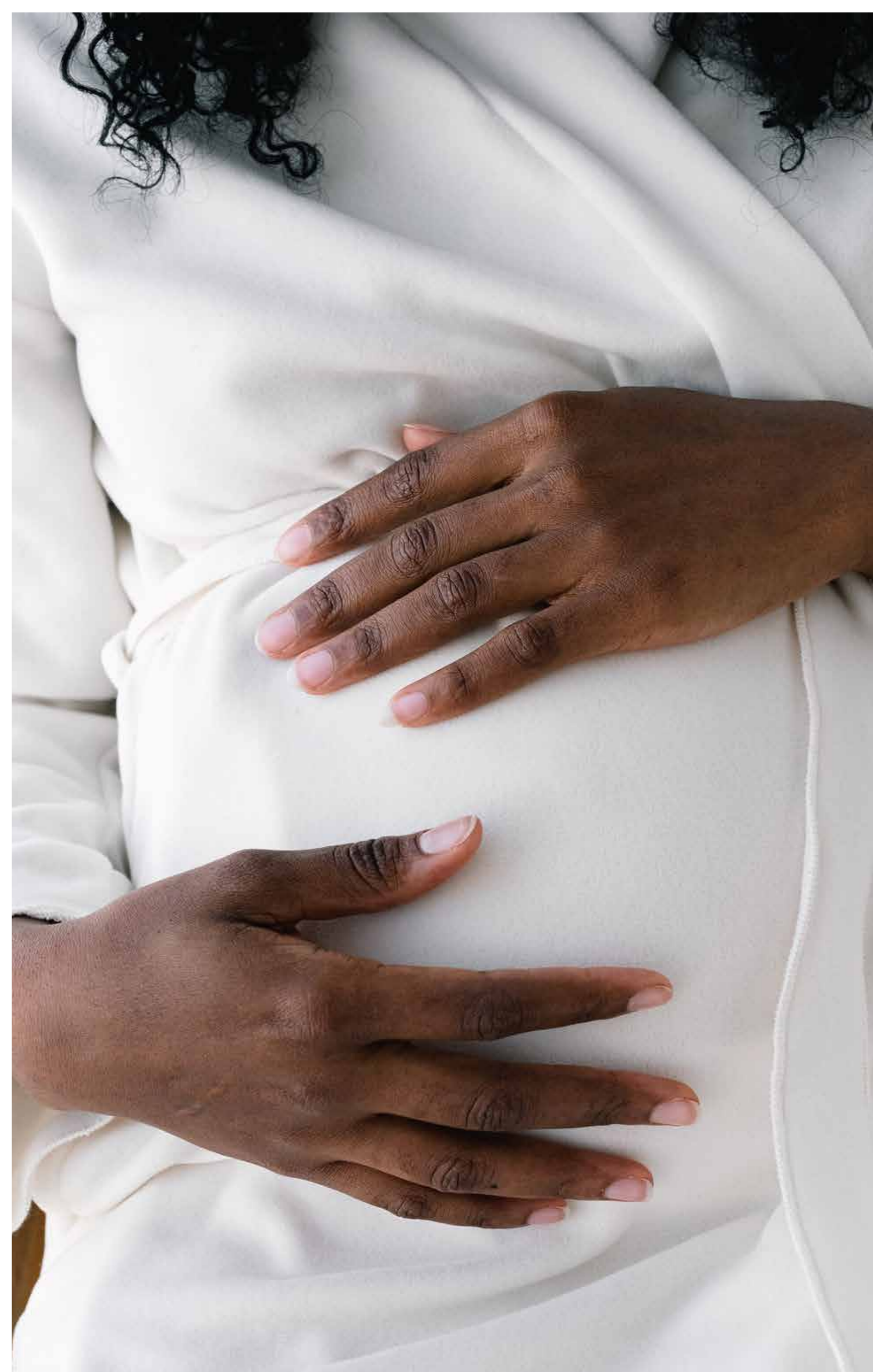
Having diabetes during pregnancy poses a risk of pregnancy complications for both the mother and her unborn child. These complications happen during the pregnancy, at delivery and also in future life.

Mothers with diabetes are at high risk of high blood pressure, losing their babies, giving birth through an operation or, at the extreme, even losing their lives. The child has a high risk of being born prematurely, being born with abnormalities or disabilities, being born as a big baby or, at the extreme, being born as a sleeping baby.

The frustration of not being able to control the blood sugar properly, and the struggle of trying to eat healthily and exercise while pregnant kicks the fun out of the pregnancy journey.

Researchers at the SAMRC (BRIP) in collaboration with the University of Pretoria found that there is a need for a South African diabetes-in-pregnancy study group – including obstetricians, physicians, endocrinologists, public health specialists, dieticians and scientists – to make evidence-based recommendations on affordable, accessible and applicable screening, diagnostic and management strategies for gestational diabetes mellitus.

“There is a need for novel, simple, accessible and affordable tests for glucose monitoring, screening and diagnosis of diabetes in pregnancy that are applicable to middle-income



Pregnant women living with diabetes are at risk of multiple complications.

countries such as South Africa,” says Nompumelelo Malaza.

Lack of early diagnosis and proper management of diabetes

in pregnancy will continue to affect the health of mother and child negatively.

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