

gestational diabetes



my pregnancy,
my baby, and me

Dear Mom-to-be,

You want to have a healthy baby and keep yourself healthy too. Knowing the foods to eat that help control your blood sugar is important. Moms sometimes feel overwhelmed when they learn they have gestational diabetes, you may be feeling this too. We hope the information and ideas in this pamphlet are helpful to you during this time of new learning.

Finding foods and activities that are healthy for you and your baby helps you manage your blood sugar levels during your pregnancy. The tips in this pamphlet don't replace your doctor's advice. Your doctor and registered dietitian will help you learn what works best for you.

Congratulations and Best Wishes!

Sincerely,

Your WIC Nutrition Program staff



You can also find more information about gestational diabetes by visiting these websites:

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/gestational/>

<http://ndep.nih.gov/am-i-at-risk/gdm/>

<http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-complications/gestational-diabetes/>

What is Gestational Diabetes?

Gestational diabetes occurs during pregnancy when your body can't make adequate use of sugar in your blood. For most women, blood sugar levels return to normal after their baby is born.

Insulin is needed for your cells to use sugar as fuel for energy. Insulin is made in the pancreas. If you have diabetes, your pancreas is unable to make enough insulin to meet your body's needs, or your body's cells have trouble using the insulin that is made. Insulin is needed to get sugar in your blood into the cells, where it is used for energy. This causes you to have high blood sugar.

- When your blood sugar is high during pregnancy, extra sugar goes to your baby.
- Your baby gets extra calories from the sugar and stores them as fat. This can make your baby weigh more at birth and make delivery harder.
- Your baby's pancreas makes extra insulin to handle the high blood sugar from you.
- After birth your baby keeps making extra insulin. This causes your baby to have low blood sugar. Your baby may have to stay in the hospital to get their blood sugar level back to normal.

What does this mean for my pregnancy?

You'll need to keep your blood sugar at a normal level to help your baby grow well and stay healthy.

When your blood sugar is high it's more likely you'll develop problems like:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Bladder infection (urinary tract infection)
- Your baby may grow to a size that might require a C-section (cesarean section) to be delivered safely.

By monitoring and controlling your blood sugar, you can help yourself and your baby to be healthy.



What does gestational diabetes mean for my baby?

Keeping your blood sugar at normal levels while you are pregnant will protect and keep your baby growing well. If your blood sugar stays high, your baby may:

- Have yellowish skin (jaundice).
- Be very large (macrosomia).
- Have a difficult birth that causes shoulder problems (brachial plexus).
- Be stillborn.
- Stay in the hospital extra days after birth with very low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).
- Have breathing problems (respiratory distress syndrome).
- Be overweight as a child or adult.
- Have type 2 diabetes later in life.



“By watching the foods I eat and adding some activity to my day, I’ve been able to keep my blood sugar in the normal range. It’s been easier than I thought and I’m glad I made these changes to keep us both healthy.”

“It’s really important for me to get back to my pre-pregnancy weight. I’m so proud of myself for keeping my weight within the guidelines.”

How can I take care of my baby now that I have gestational diabetes?

Here are things that you can do to keep your baby healthy:

- Follow a healthy eating pattern.
- Talk to a registered dietitian, certified diabetes educator, or registered nurse about habits to manage your gestational diabetes.
- Test your blood sugar several times each day.
- Exercise as your doctor suggests to help you use blood sugar.
- Use insulin as your doctor advises.
- Follow weight gain guidelines to gain a healthy amount of weight.

Your doctor or clinic will help you learn to test your blood sugar and keep it at normal levels.



What else can I do for my baby?

Eat regularly, eat small, healthy meals or snacks every 2-3 hours, include protein with each meal or snack. Have a bedtime snack like a few apple slices with peanut butter or a glass of milk.

Choose foods that won't raise your blood sugar too much. Foods that are good sources of protein won't raise your blood sugar, and will help you feel satisfied while helping your baby grow.

These include:

Eggs	Chicken or Turkey
Lean meats	Cheese
Fish	Plain yogurt
	(add your own fruit)

Some foods have protein in them, but also carbohydrate (car-bo-HIDE-rate) that can raise your blood sugar. These foods are good for you, but too much at once can raise your blood sugar too high, foods like:

Beans Milk Nuts and nut butters

Eat vegetables, most contain very few carbohydrates. They are full of vitamins and minerals your body needs, and have fiber, which helps you feel full, and helps you avoid constipation.

Try to have vegetables as often as possible. Have them cooked and served with little sauce or butter, in soups, or in salads. Add more vegetables in place of pasta, rice, bread, and tortillas.



What foods should I be careful with?

It's best not to eat sweet foods while you are pregnant because they raise your blood sugars. If you do eat them, limit the amounts by:

- Choose smaller portions
- Eating them as along with a snack
- Replacing them with another carbohydrate at a meal

Avoid or limit foods like:

potatoes	pasta	noodles
rice	tortillas	bread
jams	pies	regular sodas
honey	cakes	sweet tea
cookies	candy	Kool-aid

When you do eat breads, tortillas, and noodles or pasta, choose whole grain varieties and eat smaller portions.



“My doctor said because I have gestational diabetes my baby has a greater chance to grow up and be overweight or even have diabetes. By breastfeeding, I can help my child to be healthier for a lifetime and reduce their risk of being overweight and developing diabetes.”

Can I breastfeed my baby?

Yes. Breastfeeding is a very healthy thing for both you and your baby. It will help your body use blood sugar well after your baby is born. It will also cut down your baby’s chances of ever having diabetes.



What happens after delivery?

Gestational diabetes ends when your pregnancy is over. But women who have gestational diabetes are more likely to get type 2 diabetes after pregnancy. It is important to get regular tests for diabetes if you had gestational diabetes:

- Test for diabetes six weeks after delivery.
- Retest for diabetes every year.

Ask your doctor or clinic for the test, if the test is not offered to you.

Take care of yourself to prevent or delay diabetes. You can do this by:

- Keeping your weight at a normal level.
- Eating healthy.
- Exercising most days of the week.



“By including a protein food with my meals and snacks, I’ve been able to keep my blood sugar more stable. I don’t let myself get too hungry, so I eat something every 2 or 3 hours.”

Snacks I can choose more often:

- Boiled Eggs
- Yogurt - low sugar or plain is best
- Celery with peanut butter
- Hummus with vegetables
- Nuts
- String Cheese

My snack ideas are:

Being active after a snack or meal helps lower your blood sugar. Here’s some ideas that worked for other moms:

- “I take a short walk and I even feel better when I get back.”
- “After I’ve eaten, I do some light stretching and sometimes walk in place for a few minutes.”
- “I put on some music and dance!”
- “I take my kids to the park. They love the swings.”
- “I found when I cleaned up around the house or did a little light house work after eating, it helped my blood sugar. Folding clothes, washing dishes, sweeping the floor, or putting things away made a difference.”



A Sample Menu for You

Breakfast:

- 1 scrambled egg
- 1 slice whole wheat toast or 1 6-inch tortilla
- 1 teaspoon margarine water, coffee, or tea

Snack:

- 1-2 tablespoons hummus with raw vegetables

Lunch:

- 1 cup vegetable soup
- 2 ounces turkey lettuce and tomato slices
- 2 slices whole-wheat bread
- 2 teaspoons mayonnaise
- 1 small apple or banana
- 1 cup nonfat milk

Snack:

- 5 whole-wheat crackers
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter

Dinner:

- 3-4 oz. chicken breast without skin
- ½ cup green beans
- ½ cup homemade mashed sweet potatoes or winter squash
- 1 teaspoon margarine
- 1 cup green salad with vinegar and oil
- 1 cup nonfat milk

Snack:

- 1 orange
- 1 ounce low-fat cheese

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