

Treating Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes is mainly treated in three ways – meal planning, physical activity and insulin.

MEAL PLANNING

What you eat, how much you eat, and when you eat all have a major impact on your blood glucose levels. Ask to see a dietitian who knows about diabetes. Together, you'll design a meal plan that can help you reach your goals for blood glucose, good nutrition during pregnancy, and body weight. Many women find that having 3 small meals and 2 to 3 snacks each day helps them reach their blood glucose goals.

About Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates raise your blood glucose much more than other foods, such as high protein foods (meat, tofu), vegetables, or fats. Foods that contain carbohydrate include:

- Grains (including breads, cereals, rice, and pastas)
- Starchy vegetables (such as, green peas, corn, lima beans, and potatoes)
- Dried beans, peas, and lentils (such as, pinto beans, kidney beans, black eyed peas, and split peas)
- Fruit and fruit juice
- Dairy (such as milk and yogurt)
- Snacks (such as, crackers and chips)
- Sweets and desserts (such as, sodas, juice drinks, cake, cookies, candy, and ice cream)

*In general, non-starchy vegetables have very small amounts of carbohydrate.

Your dietitian can help you plan how much food with carbohydrates to have. If you're checking your blood glucose, you'll see how carbohydrate foods affect your levels after you've eaten. For many women, it's harder to keep blood glucose on target in the mornings. That's why your dietitian may suggest you have less carbohydrate in the morning.

About Sweeteners

Sweeteners with few or no calories, such as acesulfame K, aspartame, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose, can be used in small amounts during pregnancy. A dietitian can provide more information about various types of sweeteners and how much to use.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity changes your blood glucose levels. If you are already exercising, activity can provide other health benefits during pregnancy. Most women can benefit from physical activity throughout pregnancy. Talk with your health care team about what kinds of physical activities are best for you.

INSULIN

Many women need insulin injections along with meal planning and physical activity to keep their blood glucose levels on target. Most oral medications are not recommended during pregnancy. Injected insulin stays in your body so it won't have any effect on your baby.

More handouts about this and other topics can be found at <http://professional.diabetes.org/PatientEd>

For more information visit diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES