

Healthy Eating Recommendations for Women with Gestational Diabetes

Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet, keeping physically active, and managing your weight can help control your blood glucose levels and give you and your baby the nutrients you need for a healthy pregnancy.

A balanced diet includes moderate portions of foods with carbohydrate, protein and healthy fats. Carbohydrates are your body's main source of energy. It is **not recommended** to follow a carbohydrate-free diet as a means of controlling your blood sugars.

Carbohydrates are found in grain products, fruits, some starchy vegetables, legumes, and milk and alternatives. Carbohydrates are also found in foods such as cakes, cookies, squares, candy and sugary drinks like juice or pop.

When it comes to selecting your carbohydrates at meals and snacks, **the type you choose is just as important as the quantity you eat.**

1. Choose fibre-rich carbohydrates such as whole grain breads and cereals, quinoa, brown rice, beans, peas and lentils. Fiber slows the absorption of carbohydrate into your blood and can help manage your blood sugar after meals.
2. Choose vegetables and whole fruits rather than juice.
3. Choose low glycemic-index (GI) foods more often. Low GI foods raise blood glucose at a slower rate than high GI foods.

It is equally important to include foods that contain **protein** and small amounts of **healthy fats** at each meal and snack. Proteins and fats can help slow the absorption of carbohydrates into your blood.

- Choose protein sources that are lower in fat. Most protein foods **do not** raise your blood sugar levels because they contain very little or no carbohydrates.

Examples: lean chicken, beef or pork, fish, tofu, eggs, lower fat cheese, unsalted nuts and seeds/ nut butters.

- Choose unsaturated fats instead of saturated or trans fats. Fat **does not** raise your blood sugar level because it contains no carbohydrate.

Examples: Avocado, unsalted nuts and seeds/nut butters, vegetable oils.

Some other general recommendations for using a healthy diet to control your blood sugars include:

1. Limit foods that are high in sugar, fat and/or salt. Examples include cookies, cakes, donuts, ice cream, chips and fried foods. It is OK to eat a small quantity of these foods on occasion.
2. Be mindful of the carbohydrates in the drinks you choose. It is better to choose water, tea/coffee or milk and reduce your consumption of juice, pop and other sugary beverages.