

Nutrition and Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that happens when the amount of sugar in the blood is higher than it should be during pregnancy. At this time, the mother's body is not able to manage the glucose or sugar that she eats in a normal way. Aiming for healthy weight gain, following a healthy diet and regular physical activity can help blood sugar stay at healthy levels. Some women also need to take insulin to help with blood sugar control.

It is important for you and your baby's health to follow these nutrition guidelines:

- Eat well balanced meals that follow the *Canada Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. Include food from 3 to 4 food groups at every meal.
- Do not skip meals. You still have to eat enough to give the proper nutrition to you and your growing baby.
- Have a bedtime snack every day. Include foods from 2 to 3 food groups.
- Milk, yogurt, fruit, starchy vegetables and grains contain natural sugar. Servings of these should be spread out between 3 meals and 3 snacks each day.
- Limit food that is high in added sugar.
- Limit sweet drinks, such as fruit juice, pop and hot chocolate.

**St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Diabetes Care and Education Centre
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Turn over →

Healthy Eating Guide for Gestational Diabetes

Food group	Food to eat	1 serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate	Amount to have each day	Food to limit
Milk and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ White milk ✓ Yogurt ✓ Cream soup ✓ Unsweetened soy beverage ✓ Unsweetened almond beverage 	1 cup or 8 ounces ½ cup 1 cup 1 cup Little carbohydrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aim for 4 servings each day ➤ Limit to 1 serving at each meal or snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chocolate milk • Flavoured milk • Flavoured milk-substitute beverages
Grain and Starches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bread ✓ Pita bread ✓ Buns ✓ Rice ✓ Rice cakes, bread sticks ✓ Potato, corn ✓ Legumes, lentils ✓ Pasta, grains ✓ High fibre cereal like bran flakes, oatmeal ✓ Crackers ✓ Homemade low sugar muffins ✓ Plain cookies ✓ Bagel, English muffin ✓ Taco and tortilla shell ✓ French fries, baked ✓ Soup with a grain ✓ Popcorn ✓ Plain cake or cupcake with no icing 	1 slice bread ½ pita 1 small or 1/2 large bun 1/3 cup 2 1 small or ½ cup ½ cup ½ cup cooked 3/4 cup 6 1 small 2 to 3 ½ small 1 small (6-inch diameter) 10 or ½ small order 1 cup 3 cups 1 small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aim for 8 to 10 servings each day ➤ Limit to 2 to 3 servings at each meal ➤ Limit to 1 to 2 servings at each snack ➤ Bake low sugar muffins, cookies and loaves by using ½ the amount of sugar in the recipe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet rolls • Pies, pastry, squares, donuts • Cereals with sugar coating • Low-fibre cereal like Special K, Corn Flakes, Rice Krispies • Granola, granola bars • Muffins from stores • Cookies with icing or filling • Cake with icing

Food group	Food to eat	1 serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate	Amount to have each day	Food to limit
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fresh fruit ✓ Dried fruit ✓ Raisins ✓ Unsweetened frozen fruit ✓ Canned fruit with no sugar added 	<p>1 medium, ½ large or ½ cup</p> <p>¼ cup</p> <p>1 tablespoon</p> <p>½ cup</p> <p>½ cup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aim for 3 servings each day ➤ Limit to 1 serving at each meal ➤ Limit to 1 serving at each snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fruit juice • Fruit canned in syrup • Sweetened frozen fruit • Cranberry sauce

Food Group	Food to eat	1 serving = very little carbohydrate	Amount to have each day	Food to limit
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All vegetables 	<p>½ cup raw or cooked vegetables</p> <p>1 cup raw leafy greens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aim for 5 or more servings each day ➤ Aim for ½ of plate to be vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet pickles • Vegetables with added sugar
Meat and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Meat, fish, poultry ✓ Eggs ✓ Cottage cheese ✓ Hard cheese ✓ Peanut butter ✓ Legumes, lentils (note: these should also be counted as 1 serving from Grain and Starches Group) 	<p>2 to 4 ounces cooked</p> <p>2 eggs</p> <p>½ cup</p> <p>1 to 2 ounces</p> <p>2 tablespoons</p> <p>½ cup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aim for 3 servings each day ➤ Spread servings throughout day, aiming for 1 serving at each meal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet sauces such as sweet and sour sauce or honey and garlic sauce
Fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Butter, margarine, oil ✓ Mayonnaise, salad dressing ✓ Gravy, cream sauces ✓ Cream or spread cheese ✓ Sour cream 	<p>1 teaspoon</p> <p>Use in small amounts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limit to 1 to 2 servings at each meal ➤ Limit to control weight gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrogenated margarines • Food with trans fat

Food group	Food to eat	Food to limit
Sugars and Sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cocoa powder ✓ Ketchup ✓ Relish ✓ Mustard ✓ Mineral water ✓ No sugar added jam ✓ Soda water ✓ Sugarless gum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown sugar, white sugar, honey, molasses • Candy, chocolate • Gum with sugar • Jam, jelly, marmalade • Syrup • Regular soft drinks • Chocolate drink mixes • Fruit flavoured crystals • Iced tea, lemonade • Regular jello • Popsicles, freezies • Ice cream, frozen yogurt, sherbet • Milkshakes • Pudding

Sample One Day Menu

Breakfast	Lunch	Supper
2 slices whole wheat toast with peanut butter or 1 cup cereal 1 cup milk	1 salmon sandwich 2 cups tossed salad 1 cup milk	1 chicken breast 2/3 cup rice 1 cup of carrots and broccoli 1 cup milk
Morning Snack	Afternoon Snack	Bedtime Snack
¼ cup of nuts or seeds 1 orange	1 ounce cheese 1 apple	1 slice of whole grain bread with peanut butter 1 cup milk

Note: You may have 2 snacks between meals if needed.

Other snack ideas:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 homemade muffin | <input type="checkbox"/> ¾ cup Greek-style yogurt | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup soup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ½ sandwich | <input type="checkbox"/> ¼ cup hummus and veggies | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 cups popcorn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ¾ cup of cereal with milk | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup homemade smoothie | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 fruit |

Metric Amounts:

1 cup	250 ml	1/3 cup	80 ml
½ cup	125 ml	¼ cup	60 ml
1 teaspoon	5 ml	2 ounces	20 grams
1 tablespoon	15 ml	3 ounces	90 grams
1 ounce	30 grams	4 ounces	120 grams