

Gestational Diabetes

Dietary Advice



Booklet produced by:
Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, Carmarthenshire NHS Trust, February 2003.

What is Gestational Diabetes?

Gestational Diabetes is the name given to describe diabetes which first develops during pregnancy. This occurs because pregnancy produces hormones that raise the level of sugar in the blood. Most women respond by producing more insulin to lower the blood sugar. However, some are unable to produce more insulin and thus develop Diabetes.

To minimise risks to your baby, and to enable it to grow and develop properly, your blood sugars should be kept within normal limits. The following dietary guidelines will help you to control your blood sugar levels.

Often, blood sugar levels return to normal once the baby is born. However, some women go on to develop diabetes either after the baby is born or later on in life.

Therefore, it is important to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle when your baby is born.

Dietary Guidelines

- 1. Reduce Sugar Intake**
- 2. Regular Meals & A Wide Variety of Foods**
- 3. Increase Fibre Intake**
- 4. Avoid Excess Weight Gain**
- 5. Other Important Dietary Advice During Pregnancy**

Personal Targets

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Dietitian: _____

Tel: _____

Sample Meal Plan

BREAKFAST

Fruit or unsweetened fruit juice (small glass)
 Wholegrain cereal with low fat milk
 And /Or
 Wholegrain toast with low fat spread

LIGHT MEAL

Wholegrain or granary bread/wholegrain crackers/baked potato
 Lean meat/fish/egg or low fat cheese
 Plenty of mixed salad/vegetables
 Fruit or diet/'light' yoghurt
 Glass of Milk

MAIN MEAL

Lean meat/fish/pulses
 Potatoes/rice/pasta
 Large serving of vegetables or salad
 Sugar free dessert or fruit
 Glass of Milk/diet or 'light' yoghurt

BETWEEN MEALS

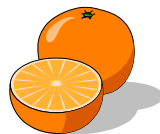
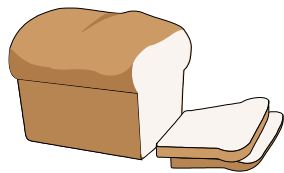
Fruit/diet or 'light' yoghurt or plain biscuit/cracker
 Small bowl of high fibre cereal & milk

1. Reduce Sugar Intake

Try to reduce the amount of sugary foods you eat as they can cause blood sugar levels to rise quickly. If you do eat sugary foods, have them as **part** of a meal, rather than in-between. Choose from the large variety of sugar-free and/or reduced sugar foods and drinks now available or adapt your own recipes to cut down sugar content.

Sugary foods/Drinks to AVOID	Suitable alternatives
Sugar, Sucrose, Glucose, Fructose, Dextrose Glucose syrup. 'Diabetic' sweeteners with Sorbitol or other Polyols. Sweeteners with some sugars added eg Hermesetas Sprinkle Sweet, Boots Sugarlite, Sucron.	Artificial sweeteners made with Aspartame, Saccharin or Acesulfame K. Tablets, liquid, powder or granulated eg Canderel, Flix, Hermesetas, Natrena, Sweetex.
Ordinary fizzy drinks, squashes and cordials eg Cola, lemonade, Lucozade, barley water. Sweetened fruit juices.	Diet, slimline or 'one cal' drinks. Sugar free/No added sugar squash. Only a small glass of pure fruit juice with a meal.
Biscuits with syrup, sucrose, chocolate, cream etc.	An occasional plain biscuit eg Oat Biscuit, Digestive, Hob Nobs, Hovis, Marie, Rich Tea, Morning Coffee, Garibaldi, savoury crackers or oatcakes.
Cakes and sweet pastries	Wholemeal scone, teacake, bara brith, malt loaf or teabread, crumpet or toasted muffin. Small slice of plain cake e.g. madeira/sponge.
Chocolates, sweets, mints, toffees including 'Diabetic' chocolates etc.	Sugar free mints or chewing gum. Opt for fresh fruit, crispbread or crackers instead.
Ordinary and 'Diabetic' jam / marmalade.	A little pure fruit, reduced sugar jam or marmalade.
Honey, syrup, treacle, lemon curd.	Try savoury spreads eg Marmite or low fat cheese spread.

Sugary foods/drinks to AVOID	Suitable alternatives
Honey coated or sugary breakfast cereals eg Frosties, Sugar Puffs, Crunchy Nut Cornflakes.	Wholegrain / high fibre cereals eg Fruit 'n' Fibre, No Added Sugar Muesli, Oatbran Cereal, Shredded Wheat, porridge, Weetabix, Branflakes, Weetaflakes etc.
Tinned fruit in syrup.	Tinned fruit in natural juice or fresh or stewed fruit with artificial sweetener added at the table.
Ordinary jelly.	Sugar free jelly powder or ready-made in individual pots.
Tins and packets of sweetened puddings eg rice pudding, custard, instant whip.	Tinned low fat, low sugar rice pudding or custard. Sugar free mousse or Angel Delight.
Fruit yoghurt/fromage frais with added sugar.	Diet – low fat and low sugar yoghurt, Natural yoghurt. Diet fromage frais.
Condensed milk.	Semi-skimmed or skimmed milk., Light Evaporated Milk
Ordinary drinking chocolate, malted milk drinks, milkshakes.	Cocoa made with low fat milk and artificial sweetener. Ovaltine Options, Cadbury's Highlights, Nescafé unsweetened cappuccino.
'Diabetic' biscuits, cakes, sweets, chocolates.	These are high in fat and calories. They are expensive and may even cause stomach upsets. Best avoided altogether.



VITAMIN D

- Vitamin D works to help you absorb calcium. Pregnant women are advised to take a Vitamin D supplement – ask your doctor regarding this.
- You can also increase your Vitamin D intake from foods with added Vitamin D e.g. spreads and breakfast cereals, or by eating oily fish e.g. mackerel, salmon, trout and sardines.

Foods To Avoid

LIVER

- Foods containing liver such as liver sausage and **all** types of pate.

CHEESE WITH BLUE VEINS

- Stilton
- Danish Blue

MOULD RIPENED CHEESES

- Camembert
- Brie

HOME MADE FOODS THAT MAY CONTAIN RAW EGGS

- Home-made mayonnaise, ice cream, cheesecake, mousse

ALSO:

- Unpasteurised goats', sheeps' and cows' milk
- Unwashed fruit & vegetables
- Raw shellfish, eggs/eggs with a runny yolk
- Undercooked poultry, meat & game
- Peanuts (and foods containing them) if there is a family history of allergy/asthma

5. Other Important Dietary Advice During Pregnancy

CALCIUM

- Aim for 1 pint of semi-skimmed or skimmed milk daily. Use this in drinks, on cereals etc.
- Have a yoghurt daily (choose diet or 'light' varieties).
- Occasionally low-fat cheese is acceptable – no more than 4oz/weekly.
- Other sources of calcium include: green vegetables, tofu, dried fruit etc.

IRON

- Mainly found in red meat, fortified breakfast cereals, pulses e.g. peas, beans, lentils and green vegetables e.g. broccoli, spinach.
- Try to include some of these foods each day.

FOLIC ACID

- Ideally, a 400 microgram folic acid tablet should be taken every day from the time you start trying to conceive until the 12th week of pregnancy.
- Also try to eat foods that are high in folic acid e.g. vegetables or foods with added folic acid e.g. fortified breakfast cereals, some polyunsaturated spreads.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

- These help the baby's brain to develop and are found in oily fish e.g. sardines, pilchards, salmon, mackerel.
- Try to include 2 portions weekly (1 portion = 3oz/75g)

2. Regular Meals & A Wide Variety of Foods

It is important that you eat **regularly, three meals a day**. To help you eat a nutritionally-balanced diet, choose foods from the following groups:-

✓ MILK, CHEESE AND YOGHURT

- Choose low-fat varieties and diet/'light' yoghurt.
- Aim for one pint of low-fat milk daily.
- Aim for no more than 4oz (100g) cheese weekly.

✓ MEAT, FISH, POULTRY, EGGS, BEANS AND LENTILS

- These are good sources of protein and iron.
- Aim for one portion at two meals/day e.g. lunch and evening meal. (1 portion = 4oz/100g).

✓ VEGETABLES, FRUIT AND SALAD – '5-A-DAY'

- These are good sources of vitamins and minerals.
- Ensure that large amounts of fruit are not eaten at one sitting – one portion at a time is advised. (1 portion = 1 apple, 1 orange, 1 banana, small handful of grapes).
- Fill up on vegetables and salad (washed) with your meals.

✓ STARCHY FOODS

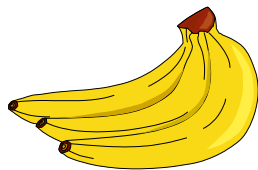
- Bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, fortified breakfast cereals should make up around 50% of each meal.
- Choose high fibre varieties of breads (e.g. granary, multigrain) and cereals (e.g. porridge, bran flakes, Weetabix, shredded wheat, shreddies, all-bran etc.).

3. Increase Fibre Intake

Foods rich in fibre can help reduce the rate of sugar absorption and can help to keep blood sugar levels within the correct range. They can, **along with adequate fluid (8-10 glasses)**, help to prevent constipation.

Tips on increasing fibre intake:-

- ✓ Try multigrain or granary bread and rolls
- ✓ Eat a high fibre breakfast cereal e.g. Oatbran Cereal, Fruit'n'Fibre, Porridge, No Added Sugar Muesli
- ✓ Eat vegetables and salad (washed) regularly
- ✓ Try eating the skins on boiled or baked potatoes
- ✓ Try adding beans and pulses to stews or casseroles
- ✓ Choose fruit for dessert or between meal snacks



4. Avoid Excess Weight Gain

The normal range of weight gain during pregnancy is around 22-28 lbs. The best ways of avoiding excess weight gain are by not only reducing your sugar intake but also reducing fatty foods. Regular gentle exercise such as walking, if advised by your GP, can also help in controlling weight.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LOSE WEIGHT WHILE YOU ARE PREGNANT

REDUCING FAT INTAKE

- ✓ Grill, bake, microwave, poach, steam rather than fry food.
- ✓ Trim visible fat from meat and avoid fatty meats.
- ✓ Use a low-fat monounsaturated/polyunsaturated spread e.g. Olivio, Utterly Butterly, Flora Light etc.
- ✓ Use semi-skimmed/skimmed milk.
- ✓ Limit cheese to a maximum of 4oz/week and use low-fat varieties.
- ✓ Reduce foods with hidden fats e.g. pastry, cakes, biscuits, crisps, tinned meat, sausages etc.

Reading Labels

Reading labels on food packaging is a good way of identifying which foods are high in fat and sugar. Use the information below to select appropriate foods:-

Look for:-

FAT	Less than 5g per 100g of product
SUGAR	Less than 10g per 100g
	Less than 2g per 100ml in drinks e.g. squash