

# Gestational Diabetes Nutrition Guidelines

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is a condition that causes high blood glucose (blood sugar) levels during pregnancy. Hormone changes during pregnancy can make it harder for your body to process blood sugar well. GDM usually goes away after delivery.

If you have any questions, talk with your dietitian or physician.

Some people with GDM may need medication along with nutrition therapy to manage their blood glucose. Keeping your blood glucose levels managed will help reduce risks for both you and your baby. Your physician can tell you more about the risks.

To get started, this brochure will explain what you need to know about:

- › Creating a healthy meal plan
- › Foods you should limit
- › Food portion control
- › Reading food labels

You should meet with a registered dietitian (RD) to talk about a plan that is right for you.

## Creating a healthy meal plan for gestational diabetes mellitus

Here are some basic guidelines that will help you manage your blood glucose.

### **Eat 3 meals per day**

- › Plan to eat your meals at about the same time each day.
- › Do not skip meals.
- › Have a small snack if your meals are more than 4 hours apart.

### **Limit foods high in sugar or refined carbohydrates including:**

- › Candy
- › Pastries
- › Desserts
- › Sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda and lemonade
- › Juice
- › Processed food with added sugar (aim for foods with less than 5 grams of added sugar per serving)
- › White bread, pasta and rice

### **Pair carbohydrate-containing foods with a source of protein and fat**

- › Eating carbohydrates along with protein and fat will help make you feel full. This can help reduce blood sugar spikes after meals and snacks.
- › Sources of protein and fat include:
  - Nuts, seeds and nut butter
  - Avocado
  - Cheese
  - Greek yogurt
  - Hummus
  - Eggs
  - Cottage cheese
  - Meat, poultry and fish

### **Include healthy carbohydrates**

While all foods can affect your blood glucose, carbohydrates may have the biggest impact. Monitor the amount of carbohydrates you eat in each meal and snack. Choose healthy carbohydrates to improve your blood glucose.

Examples of healthy carbohydrates are:

- › Whole grains (quinoa, farro, oats, brown rice, and whole grain bread and pasta)
- › Beans and lentils
- › Starchy vegetables (winter squash, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn and peas)
- › Fruit (limit to less than 1 cup of fruit per serving)
- › Milk and plain yogurt

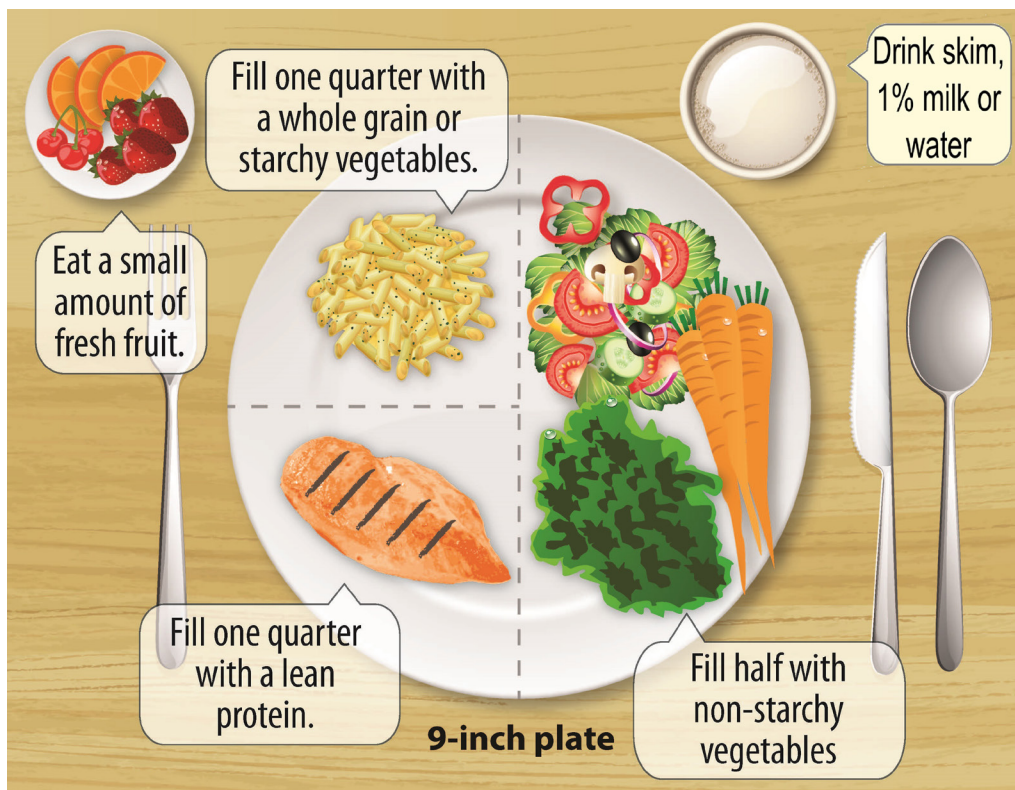
### Follow your clinician's guidelines

- › Do regular physical activity.
- › Monitor your blood glucose as advised by your clinician.
- › Take medications as directed.

### Use the My Plate Planner

Creating a balanced plate is the easiest way to keep your blood glucose in goal range. You can substitute fruit or milk for starchy vegetables and whole grains on your plate.

**Figure 1: My Plate Planner**



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## Reading food labels

Food labels have important information to help you manage your meal plan (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Food Nutrition Label

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
<b>Vitamin D</b> 2mcg 10%	
<b>Calcium</b> 260mg 20%	
<b>Iron</b> 8mg 45%	
<b>Potassium</b> 235mg 6%	

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

1. Find the serving size.

2. Find the total carbohydrate per serving. For most people with GDM, 30 to 45 grams (g) of carbohydrates is the right amount per meal. Snacks should contain 15 to 30 g of carbohydrates. Your RD may adjust this based on your needs and blood glucose control.

3. Aim for 28 g of fiber daily.

4. Limit the amount of added sugar in your diet.

5. Most people who are pregnant need 80 to 100 g of protein every day.

These are general guidelines. If you have any questions, talk with your RD or physician.

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