

Gestational Diabetes



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease which causes people to have high levels of sugar in their blood. Many of the foods we eat break down into sugar. Insulin is needed to get the sugar into our cells to give us energy. Diabetes happens when the body cannot make enough insulin or the body does not use the insulin properly.

What is gestational diabetes?

- temporary condition that occurs during pregnancy but it increases your chances of getting diabetes in the future (both mother and child)
- hormones in pregnancy block some of the insulin
- may be controlled by healthy eating and activity or may need to inject insulin
- occurs in 3 to 5% of pregnancies and up to 18% in First Nations women

Do I have to get tested?

All pregnant women should be tested for gestational diabetes between 24-28 weeks of pregnancy. Some doctors test sooner if you have several risk factors.

Will I have diabetes after baby is born?

- Have your blood sugars checked 6 to 8 weeks after delivery to make sure you don't.
- Diabetes in pregnancy is a warning and you may be more likely to get diabetes later in life.

Will my baby be born with diabetes?

- No, but your baby will have an increased risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes later in life
- Your baby may grow very large if your blood sugars are too high
- Your baby may be born with low blood sugar

Who is at risk for gestational diabetes?

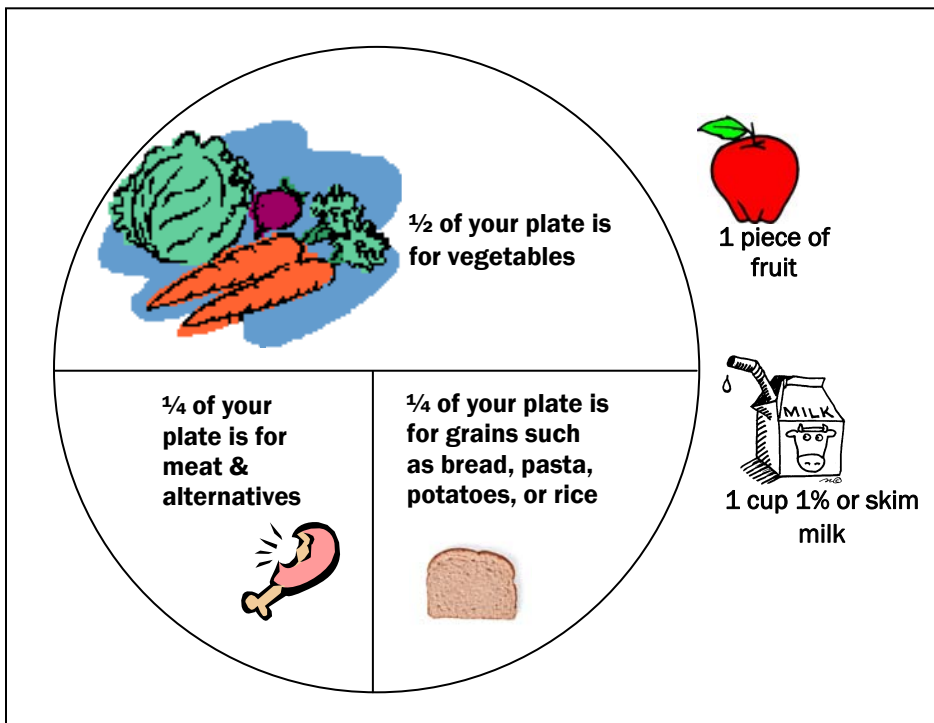
Any woman can develop gestational diabetes for no particular reason. Certain risk factors increase your chances of developing gestational diabetes such as:

- strong family history of diabetes
- gestational diabetes in a previous pregnancy
- a mother who is overweight
- 35 years of age or older
- psychological/physical stress
- previous stillbirth/miscarriage
- member of a high risk ethnic group: First Nations, Hispanic, Asian, African
- previous large baby (over 9 pounds)

Eating healthy when you have gestational diabetes (sample menu – to give you an idea of how to eat)

Breakfast	Morning Snack	Lunch	Afternoon Snack	Supper	Bedtime Snack
1 hard boiled egg 1 slice whole wheat toast ½ cup oatmeal 1 cup 1% or skim milk	½ banana or 1 slice whole wheat toast	1 grilled cheese sandwich 1 apple 1 cup celery sticks 1 cup 1% or skim milk	2 ounces low fat cheese 6 crackers ½ cup raw carrots	1 piece baked chicken (no skin) ½ cup rice ½ cup peas ½ cup canned unsweetened fruit (drain the juice) water to drink	1 slice whole wheat toast with peanut butter 1 cup 1% or skim milk

This is what your “healthy plate” should look like:



What can I do?



- Eat small, frequent meals and snacks. Don't go longer than 4 hours between meals.
- Eat foods high in fibre such as whole grain bread, bran flakes, lentils, brown rice, vegetables, and fruits.
- Eat 3-4 servings from low-fat milk products
- Eat lower fat meats – lean hamburger, chicken without skin, fish, beans such as kidney beans, eggs.
- ½ hour of walking everyday can help control your blood sugar.
- Consult your health care provider before exercising

Get active!



- Limit high sugar foods such as regular pop, candies, chocolate, desserts, syrup, slurpees, jam, honey.
- Limit high fat foods such as potato chips, french fries, donuts, burgers.
- Juice is **not** recommended. This included unsweetened orange or apple juice. Eat a piece of fruit instead – it does not raise your blood sugar as quickly.

