

Diet and Diabetes in Pregnancy



Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Contact Numbers: 01256 313232 (Basingstoke)
01962 824438 (Winchester)

Sample Meal Plan

The diet and portion sizes recommended in this leaflet and illustrated below are also advisable beyond your pregnancy as they represent a healthy balanced diet. Include two of the suggested snacks each day if you are hungry or losing weight.

Breakfast

- Wholegrain breakfast cereal/toast with savoury spread
- Egg/bacon on wholegrain toast
- Chapati/rice with vegetable/lentil/meat dish

Lunch/Light Meal

- Soup with wholegrain bread
- Meat/meat replacement/fish/cheese/egg sandwich
- Chapati/rice with vegetable/lentil/meat dish
- Piece of fruit
- Low sugar/natural yogurt

Dinner/Main Meal

- Meat/meat replacement/fish/cheese or egg dish
- Potato/rice/pasta
- Vegetables/salad
- No added sugar instant whip dessert/jelly
- Couple of squares of dark chocolate

Snacks

- Plain biscuit/cake
- Cheese/savoury spread and crackers
- Hummus with vegetable sticks
- Piece of fruit
- Low sugar/natural yogurt

Drinks

- Hot drinks made with artificial sweetener or without sugar
- No added sugar squash/diet soft drinks

Include Starchy Carbohydrate at Every Meal



Starchy carbohydrates are foods which are broken down by the body into glucose and used for energy. They are very important for you and your baby. To help manage your blood glucose levels, it is important to spread your carbohydrate foods out over three meals. It is best to include high fibre carbohydrates as these will cause a slower rise in blood glucose levels because they have a lower 'glycaemic index'.

Portion sizes will affect your post-meal blood glucose reading. Try to keep to the recommended portion sizes. Be particularly careful when eating out or having takeaway foods.

Type of Starchy Carbohydrate	Preferred Option
Bread (2 slices)	Wholegrain, granary, '50:50', rye breads/crackers
Pasta (75g uncooked)	Brown pasta
Rice (75g uncooked)	Basmati rice, brown rice
Breakfast cereals (30-45g serving)	Porridge, bran based cereals
Potato (3 egg sized)	Potatoes with skins for example wedges, baked or swap for sweet potato

Carbohydrate at Breakfast

The body struggles to process carbohydrate most in the morning, as a result post-breakfast blood glucose levels are often the highest of the day. Try to choose low 'glycaemic index' foods, keep to the suggested portion sizes and increase protein intake:

- High fibre/low sugar cereals
- Eggs on wholemeal/granary toast
- Natural yogurt with banana and oats
- Bacon/meat alternative sandwich
- Reduce rice/chapati portion if having a curry dish

Including Fruit and Vegetables in Your Diet



Fruit is a source of sugar but also of vitamins and fibre. It is recommended that it is limited to three portions per day; a portion is approximately one handful or half a handful if the fruit is dried. Spread intake of fruit across the day.

It is best to avoid fruit juice, or limit to one small (150ml) glass per day as this is high in sugar.

Vegetables will not raise your blood glucose levels and therefore can be eaten freely.

Sources of Protein and Iron



Ensure protein foods are included within two meals per day to meet requirements for pregnancy. Meat, fish or 'Quorn' (size of a pack of cards) are good source, as well as pulses (*three tablespoons*), eggs (two) and nuts (30g).

Protein foods alone will not raise blood glucose levels significantly and will lower the glycaemic index of a meal. High protein foods are useful to base breakfasts and snacks around, see the sample meal plan for ideas.

Aim to include red meat or oily fish twice a week to ensure your iron intake is adequate, alternative sources of iron include: beans, pulses, dried fruits, vegetarian products and fortified breakfast cereals. Avoid liver or products containing liver such as pâté due to high Vitamin A content. Two portions of fish one of which should be oily also provide the requirement for omega-3 fatty acids however avoid high mercury fish such as marlin, swordfish or shark.

Calcium and Dairy Products



It is important to have a good intake of calcium for bone health. Aim for three portions, or more, of the following per day:

- Glass of milk ($\frac{1}{3}$ of a pint)
- Matchbox size piece of cheese
- Small pot of low-sugar yogurt
- Ensure any alternative dairy products are fortified with calcium

To maximise absorption of calcium and ensure normal foetal development, make sure you are taking a 10mcg Vitamin D supplement.

Exercise

Physical activity can help lower your blood glucose readings. This can be any activity that gets you slightly out of breath and raises your heart rate, such as cycling or fast walking. Being physically active after a meal can immediately lower your post-meal glucose levels; aim for two and half hours in total per week.

After Your Baby is Born

It is likely that your blood glucose levels will return to pre-pregnancy levels as soon as you have had your baby. You will also be asked to come back for a check-up six weeks after birth.

If you have had gestational diabetes during pregnancy you are more at risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life. For this reason it is important for you to maintain a healthy weight, take regular exercise and consume a balanced diet. You will also have gestational diabetes in all subsequent pregnancies so following this advice will ensure you are as healthy as possible.

High blood glucose levels during pregnancy may lead to your baby growing larger than normal. It is important you follow a healthy diet, whilst limiting foods which raise your blood glucose levels. Diet and lifestyle changes may be sufficient however some women will require medications as well.

Avoiding Sugar



Sugar and sugary foods will raise your blood glucose levels very quickly; this means they are high ‘glycaemic index’ foods. Reducing the amount of sugar in your diet will help you to maintain your blood glucose levels within the recommended limits. Try making the following swaps:

Limit	Try
Sugar	Artificial sweeteners, for example, Splenda™, Canderel™ or supermarket brand versions.
Sugary drinks such as fizzy soft drinks, cordials and hi-juice.	Diet, sugar free or ‘Zero’ varieties, sugar free squash/flavoured water
Hot chocolate or malted hot drinks	Artificially sweetened versions for example Options™/Highlights™
Fruit juice, high in natural sugars	Limit to one small glass per day
Jam, marmalade, syrups and honey	Use savoury spreads or small portions of reduced sugar jam/marmalade
Breakfast cereals e.g. ‘frosted’, syrup coated, chocolate coated, or granolas	Low sugar cereals e.g. plain Weetbix™/Shredded Wheat™, porridge or muesli
Sweets, coated biscuits, chocolates, cakes and pastries	Plain biscuits, scones or teacakes.
‘Diabetic’ & slimming products should be avoided as they can often be expensive and contain as much fat/calories as standard varieties	

Notes

Dietitian:

Telephone No: