

Gestational Diabetes & Nutrition

WHAT IS GESTATIONAL DIABETES?

Gestational diabetes (GDM) happens when your body can't make enough insulin during pregnancy. This causes higher blood sugar levels, which can affect you and your baby's health.

- Usually diagnosed between 24–28 weeks of pregnancy.
- More common in women of color, those with a family history of diabetes, or those who've had GDM before.

♥ THE GOOD NEWS

With healthy eating, activity, and medical support, most people manage GDM safely and have healthy pregnancies.

✦ WHY NUTRITION MATTERS

Food directly affects blood sugar. The goal is to keep your blood sugar steady throughout the day — protecting your baby's growth and your own health.

♥ KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Balance carbs with protein and healthy fats.
- Choose high-fiber carbs (whole grains, beans, fruits, veggies).
- Eat smaller, balanced meals and snacks regularly.
- Stay hydrated — water is best.



◆◆ PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Light activity helps your body use insulin better.

- Try walking, swimming, or prenatal yoga.
- Aim for 30 minutes a day (break into smaller sessions if needed).
- Always check with your provider before starting new exercises.

◆◆ MONITORING AND MEDICAL CARE

- Your provider may ask you to check blood sugar with a finger stick.
- Target levels are usually before meals and 1–2 hours after, but follow your provider's advice.
- Sometimes medication or insulin is needed if food and activity aren't enough.

◆◆ AFTER PREGNANCY

- Blood sugar usually returns to normal, but you have a higher chance of type 2 diabetes later.
- Ask your provider for a blood sugar test 4–12 weeks after delivery.
- Keep healthy habits for yourself and your family — eating well benefits everyone.

◆◆ MEAL AND SNACK TIPS



Breakfast:

Whole-grain toast + eggs + fruit



Lunch:

Brown rice or quinoa + grilled chicken + salad/veggies



Dinner:

Baked fish + roasted sweet potatoes + greens



Snacks:

Apple slices with peanut butter, Greek yogurt with berries, hummus with carrots



PLATE METHOD

Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate with non-starchy veggies, $\frac{1}{4}$ with lean protein, $\frac{1}{4}$ with whole-grain or starchy food.

LEARN MORE

For more information, please visit:

cdc.gov/diabetes/about/gestational-diabetes

Additional resources:

[NIH/NIDDK](#)

[NICHD](#)