

South Warwickshire



NHS Foundation Trust

Warwickshire Dietetic Service

**Dietary Advice for Gestational
Diabetes**

You should have already received some information on gestational diabetes from your midwife. This leaflet concentrates on healthy lifestyle and diet to help manage your condition.

Why is it necessary to follow a healthy diet?

In order to control your gestational diabetes, it is important to follow a diet which will keep your blood sugar (glucose) levels stable (normal levels range from 4 – 7mmol).

This booklet explains how you can alter your diet to help control your diabetes.

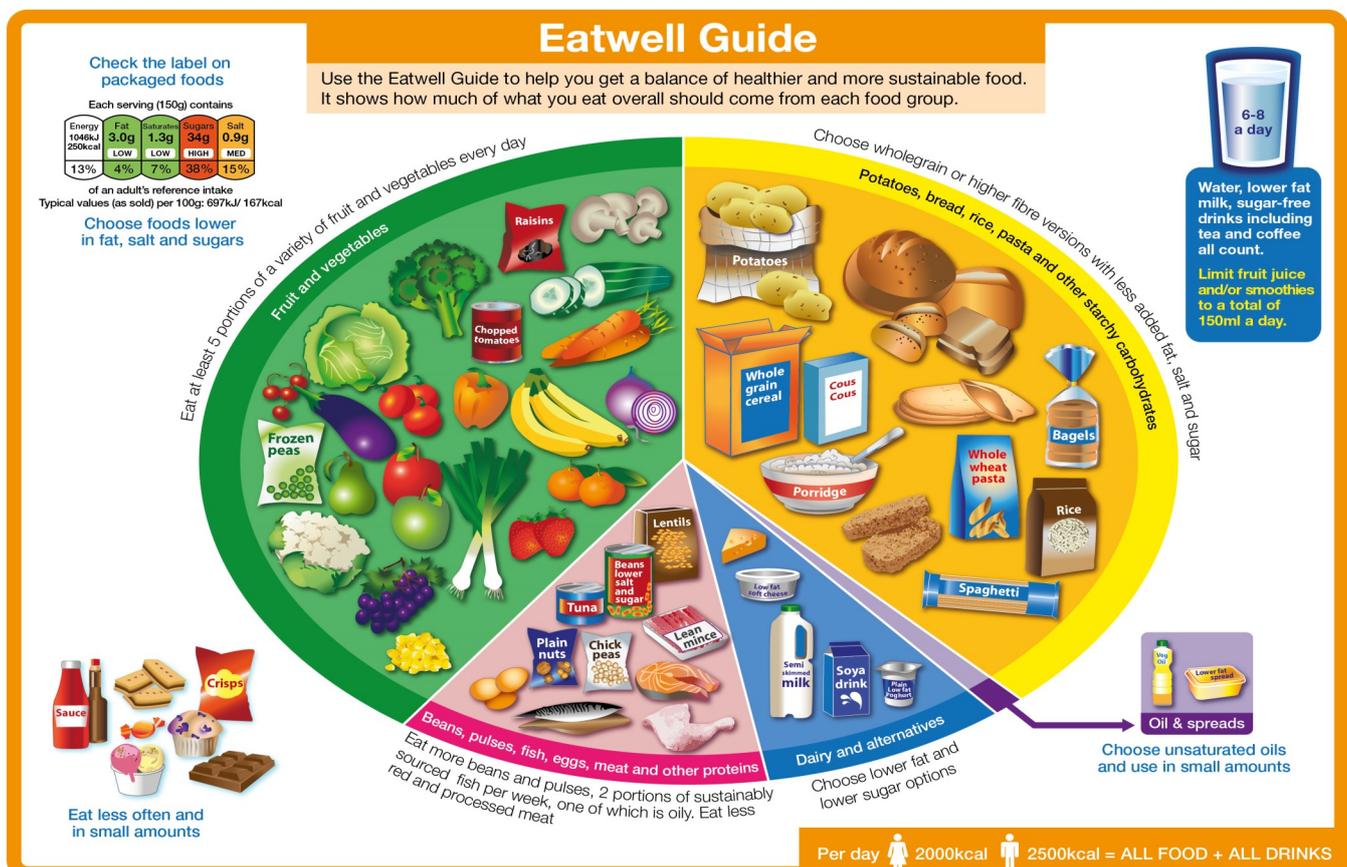
What should I do?

For women with gestational diabetes the main dietary principles are:

- eat regular meals with a small portion of starchy carbohydrates at each meal
- eat more fibre or wholegrain foods
- reduce sugar, sugary foods and drinks
- eat plenty of vegetables and some fruit every day
- reduce your fat intake.

Healthy Eating

It is important to eat the right foods in the correct amounts for a **well-balanced, healthy diet**. The leaflet 'Be Well in Pregnancy' contains more information about healthy and safe eating.



Dietary Advice for Gestational Diabetes

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

Carbohydrate foods are broken down 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 over the day. Foods containing carbohydrate include:

- breads, chapatti and breakfast cereals
- pasta, rice and noodles
- potato, sweet potato, cassava
- plantains and yam
- pulses such as baked beans, red kidney beans and lentils

Carbohydrate foods that contain little nutritional value include sugar (sucrose), sweets, chocolate, soft drinks, cordials, lollies, cakes and biscuits. It is wise to avoid these foods.

If you are finding your blood glucose levels are rising above target you may need to trial a reduction in your carbohydrate portions.

In some instances, you may be eating the right amount and type of carbohydrate foods for your body, but still have high blood glucose levels. If this happens, it is important not to cut back on carbohydrates. Sometimes your bodies may require a little extra help to manage blood glucose levels and medications and/or insulin may be needed.

Choosing high fibre starchy carbohydrates, as well as fruit and vegetables and plenty of fluids (8-10 cups per day) will help to prevent constipation.

Glycaemic Index (GI)

Carbohydrate containing foods increase blood glucose levels. Different types affect blood glucose levels differently and the Glycaemic index (GI) is a measure of this.

Foods with a low GI release their glucose slowly into the blood, helping to keep your blood glucose levels more stable and keep you fuller for longer making them better choices.

Some examples of lower GI foods are listed on page 8 in the column 'best choices'.

Foods and drinks high in sugar

Foods containing sugar include soft drinks, sweets, jam and sugar, as well as foods such as cakes, puddings, biscuits, pastries and ice-cream. Foods from this group are not necessary as part of a healthy diet.

Artificial sweeteners can be useful. The most commonly used are saccharin, aspartame, stevia, sucralose and acesulfame K. The flavour of some of these can change on heating so use after cooking. Newer sweeteners are being developed all the time which can be used in cooking and generally have a better flavour.

The table below gives lower sugar options:

Use these foods	Limit these foods
Wholegrain cereals, e.g. Shredded Wheat, Weetabix, Branflakes, porridge and other high fibre cereals	Sugar-coated breakfast cereals e.g. Frosties, Sugar Puffs, Honey Nut and Crunchy Nut Cornflakes
Natural/greek yoghurt, fromage frais, sugar-free jelly, milk puddings made with sweetener	Sweetened desserts and puddings. Ordinary jelly
Reduced sugar jam, marmalade or fruit spread. Peanut butter or marmite.	Sugar, jam, honey, syrup, lemon curd, treacle, sweets, toffees, chocolate.
All fruit: fresh, frozen or tinned in natural juice	Tinned fruit with syrup
Plain biscuits, e.g. rich tea, digestive	Sweetened and chocolate coated biscuits
Tea-bread, malt loaf, teacakes, scones	Sweet cakes and pastries
Water, sugar-free squashes, diet or zero fizzy drinks, tea, coffee, herbal teas	Sugar containing squashes and fizzy drinks. Fruit smoothies and juices.

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals and some fibre.

This group includes fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruit, vegetables and salad. Aim to eat a combination of at least 5 portions of vegetables, salad and some fruit each day.

Because fruits and fruit juices contain fruit sugar (fructose) it is advisable to spread out your fruit intake, having just one portion at a time. Limit fruit juice to one small glass per day, preferably taken with a meal.

What is a portion?

Vegetables	3 tablespoons
Salad	1 dessert bowl
Whole fresh fruit	1 medium sized piece of fruit eg. 1 apple/ pear/ orange/banana/peach
Tinned fruit, fruit salad, stewed fruit	3 - 4 large tablespoons
Large fruits	1 slice melon or pineapple ½ grapefruit
Small fruit	2 plums/ kiwi 1 cupful grapes, cherries, strawberries
Dried fruit	1 tablespoon
Fruit juice	1 small glass or carton (150ml)

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Beans and pulses can also be eaten as part of this group. These contain good sources of carbohydrate. This group provides a good source of protein. It includes meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, beans and pulses.

Eat moderate amounts and choose lower fat versions. This means cutting the fat off meat, eating poultry without skin and fish without batter. Cook these foods without added fat. Limit the amount of processed meat such as sausages and beef burgers.

Dairy and alternatives

Whilst you are pregnant it is important you ensure you have adequate calcium in your diet, and milk and dairy provide a good source of this. This group includes milk, cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais.

Aim to eat 3 portions of this group daily. If you have soya milk check it contains calcium and is unsweetened.

What is a portion?

A portion is:

- 200ml ($\frac{1}{3}$) pint of milk
- 1 small pot of diet yoghurt (approx. 125g)
- 1 small pot of cottage cheese (approx. 110g)
- 1 small pot of diet fromage frais (approx. 125g)
- 30g ($1\frac{1}{2}$ oz) of cheese or paneer.

Foods containing fat

Foods containing fat include margarine, butter, other spreading fats and low fat spreads, cooking oil, oil-based salad dressings, mayonnaise, cream, chocolate, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cakes, puddings, ice-cream, creamy sauces and gravy made from the meat juices/ fat.

Eating a lot of high fat foods will make you gain weight and may lead to heart disease in later life. Being overweight also makes your diabetes harder to control.

Ways to eat less fat:

- Spread margarine and butter thinly.
- Use an unsaturated margarine or low fat spread (olive or sunflower oil based).
- Use a monounsaturated oil instead of lard or ghee e.g. rapeseed or olive oil.
- Use skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk. Avoid full fat milk and cream.
- Choose diet, light (lite) or sugar free yoghurts.
- Use reduced fat mayonnaise, salad cream and salad dressings sparingly.
- Reduce your intake of snack foods such as crisps, nuts, cakes, puddings and chocolate .
- Limit meat products such as sausages, burgers, pate, pork pies, pasties and battered products
- Remove skin from poultry.
- Choose lean cuts of meat or use less meat (try adding pulses to dishes instead e.g. beans, peas, lentils).
- Limit fried foods. Try to poach, grill or steam instead.
- Limit cheese intake. Choose small amounts of lower fat versions e.g. cottage cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ fat cheddar, feta and low fat soft cheese.

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Weight control

It is important not to put too much weight on during pregnancy. The normal amount of weight gained during pregnancy is 9-12kg (1½ -2 stone). If you were overweight prior to your pregnancy, try to gain less weight than this. However, following a strict weight reducing diet is not recommended.

In order to control your weight gain you may need to be careful about your portion sizes and how much fat you eat. High fat foods contain a lot of calories which could contribute to weight gain, making your diabetes harder to control. For further information and advice speak to your dietitian.

Physical activity

All women should be doing some physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. This should continue during pregnancy.

If you were active before pregnancy, aim to maintain this level but do not try to do more than before. You will find as your pregnancy progresses, you will need to adapt the type of exercise that you undertake.

Low blood glucose levels

If you are on insulin you must eat regularly to avoid low blood glucose levels. You may need to include additional healthy snacks between meals and before bed to achieve optimal blood glucose control. It is important to eat regular meals to prevent your blood glucose from swinging from one extreme to the other.

Diabetic products

Diabetic branded products are not recommended. They are expensive, high in calories and can have a laxative effect and produce wind and abdominal pain in some people.

Alcohol

Alcohol can harm your developing baby. The safest level of alcohol to drink in pregnancy is none. If you have any concerns about alcohol you should talk to your GP or midwife who can help you find the support you need.

Help with food choices

*** These foods are high in fat or sugar and should be eaten in moderation**

	Best Choices	Good Choices	Poor Choices*
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	<p>Granary, Multigrain, Rye, Pumpernickel, Wholegrain Chapattis</p> <p>Oat based cereals e.g. porridge, unsweetened muesli, Quaker Oat range, Kelloggs Optivita Oat Crisp or Oatibix, oatmeal.</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals e.g. Sultana Bran, All Bran All shapes and varieties of pasta</p> <p>Basmati rice, noodles, boiled new potatoes</p> <p>Multi-grain crackers, Oatcakes</p>	<p>Wholemeal, White bread, Pitta Bread, Crumpets, Bagels, Rice Cakes, French stick</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals e.g. Branflakes Weetabix, Shredded Wheat</p> <p>Cheerios (plain), Special K Sustain, Rice Krispies, Cornflakes</p> <p>Brown and white rice, Couscous, sweet potato, yam, mashed and jacket potato</p> <p>Ryvita, Crisp breads</p>	<p>Croissants</p> <p>Coco Pops, Sugar Puffs, Honey Nut Cornflakes, Frosted flakes</p> <p>Chips, roast potatoes</p>
Fruit and Vegetables	<p>All fresh, frozen, tinned in natural juice or dried fruit. All fresh or frozen vegetables or salad</p>	<p>Tinned vegetables in unsalted water</p>	<p>Vegetable Crisps Roast vegetables Vegetables in cheese or cream sauce</p>
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	<p>Chicken, turkey (skin removed), lean red meat, soya protein, meat substitute. Eggs</p> <p>Fish (particularly oily fish such as salmon, fresh tuna and mackerel), shellfish</p> <p>All pulses e.g. peas, lentils, beans, red kidney beans.</p> <p>Chestnuts</p>	<p>Pork, lamb, gammon, ham, lean bacon, corned beef</p> <p>Fish in breadcrumbs</p> <p>Walnuts, pine-nuts*</p>	<p>Sausages, luncheon meat, pate, salami, burgers, streaky bacon, meat pies, sausage rolls, scotch eggs, crackling, chicken skin</p> <p>Fish in batter</p> <p>Salted peanuts and most other nuts</p>
Dairy and alternatives	<p>Diet yoghurts, 1% or skimmed milk, low fat cheese (e.g. cottage cheese)</p>	<p>Semi-skimmed milk, medium fat cheeses such as Edam, Camembert, cheese spreads, non dairy ice-cream</p>	<p>Whole milk and cream, full fat yoghurt, cheese, imitation cream, condensed milk, dairy ice-cream</p>
Snack foods	<p>English muffins, scones, teacakes, fruit loaf or bread.</p>	<p>Rich Tea, Morning Coffee, Arrowroot biscuits, cream crackers, arrowroot biscuits, malt loaf.</p>	<p>Cream and chocolate biscuits, fancy and iced cakes or muffin. Chocolate, sweets. Pastry e.g. apple pie or pork pie. Jam and honey. Crisps.</p>

Suggested Meal Plan

Breakfast

- Oat based breakfast cereals such as porridge or unsweetened muesli.
- Granary or wholegrain toast with poached or scrambled egg or topping of choice.

Main meal

- Try basmati rice, sweet potato, new potatoes, pasta or noodles with your meal.
- Include more vegetables/salad.
- A portion of lean meat, fish, eggs, beans or dhal.
- Add beans, pulses, buckwheat, bulgur wheat and pearl barley to soups, casseroles and mince dishes.

Snack meal

- Sandwich made with seeded or wholegrain bread.
- New potato, pasta or basmati rice salad with low fat dressing.
- Vegetable or lentil based soup with bread roll.

Snacks/supper/puddings and drinks (optional)

Cup of tea, coffee, water, low fat milk, unsweetened squash or diet drink

Piece of fruit or portion of tinned fruit in natural juice

Plain biscuit or oatcake

Handful unsweetened nuts & seeds

Breadsticks or vegetable sticks and hummus

Plain popcorn

Diet, natural or Greek yoghurt

Sugar free jelly

Note: Main meal and snack meal can be interchangeable

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Further information can be obtained from:

British Dietetic Association www.bda.uk.com

Diabetes UK www.diabetes.org.uk

Global Diabetes Community www.diabetes.co.uk

Tommys www.tommys.org

Healthy Start www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Change for Life www.nhs.uk/change4life

Perinatal Institute <http://www.preg.info/PlanningAFamilyDiabetesNotes/ViewTheLeaflets.aspx>

Notes/food diary:

Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect.

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email:

Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road Entrance to the hospital.

If you have any queries about your diet, please contact us on 01926 600818, selecting option 3.

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