

Gestational Diabetes Diet

Gestational diabetes is diabetes that occurs during pregnancy. When you have gestational diabetes your body is unable to keep your blood glucose, or blood sugar, within normal limits. During pregnancy, abnormal blood sugar levels can increase the risk of health problems with the mother and the baby. By watching what, when, and how much you eat, you can usually keep your blood sugar within normal limits. There are three main principles behind the diet for gestational diabetes:

1. Your hormones at this stage of pregnancy keep your blood sugar higher in the morning. Because of this, you need to **eat a very small breakfast** (see meal pattern below).
2. Your body can only manage small amounts of carbohydrates at a time. This means **eating smaller meals more often. It is recommended that you have 6 small meals per day.** Carbohydrates are found in starchy foods, fruit, milk and sugary foods. You do not want to cut the carbohydrates from your diet – carbohydrates are still the basis of a healthy diet. You just want to control the amount of carbohydrate eaten and spread the carbohydrate foods throughout the day. By eating six small meals, you help fuel your body and your baby's body and also keep your blood sugar within a normal range.
3. **Eating a little protein at each mini-meal** helps meet the needs of pregnancy and helps stabilize your blood sugar.

Most women need about 2000 calories during the third trimester once they have been diagnosed with gestational diabetes. A sample meal pattern and menu are provided below:

Breakfast	1 carbohydrate serving 1 oz. meat/meat substitute ½ serving milk 1 serving fat	1 slice whole wheat toast OR ½small bagel 1 oz. low fat cheese OR 1 egg 4 oz. skim milk (None- in cheese)
Snack	1 carbohydrate serving 1 oz. meat/meat substitute	1 small apple OR 6 saltines OR 1 slice bread 1 tbsp. peanut butter OR 1 oz. cheese
Lunch	4 servings carbohydrate 2 oz. meat/meat substitute 1 serving non-starchy veg. 2 fats	2 slices wheat bread, 1 orange, 1 oz. chips 1 oz. turkey, 1 oz. swiss cheese lettuce/tomato OR raw carrots NONE- found in chips, cheese
Snack	2 carbohydrates	1 large banana OR 3c. lowfat popcorn & 1 fruit
Dinner	4 carbohydrates 3 oz. meat/meat substitute 1-2 servings non-starchy veg. 2 servings fat	1c. whole grain pasta, ½c. sauce 3 oz. meatballs 2 cups salad 2 Tbsp. dressing
Snack	2-3 servings carbohydrate 1 oz. meat/meat substitute*	¾c. unsweetened cereal & 1c. strawberries 1c. skim milk (counts as a carb & 1oz. meat)

*If you do not have milk with your evening snack, add an ounce of meat or meat substitute.

- You can drink any calorie-free beverages with meals – including water, caffeine free coffee or tea, and caffeine free diet drinks. Limit artificial sweeteners to a few servings per day.
- If you skip a meal, you cannot add that food to another meal later in the day.
- Try not to skip meals. If you can't eat as much food as is listed, eat what you can.