

## **Gestational Diabetes: Prevent Your Child Developing Diabetes**

What causes gestational diabetes?

Having gestational diabetes during pregnancy can mean that too much sugar is passed to your developing baby, increasing their risk of becoming diabetic later in life. Following a well planned gestational diabetes diet can reduce this risk by controlling the level of sugar in your blood, and reducing the amount that is passed to your baby via the placenta.

There are other issues that can arise from your baby receiving too much sugar. The main problem will be that your baby could grow exceptionally large, causing difficulties with delivery. Overweight babies have a much higher chance of being born by caesarean section and experiencing birth complications than normal weight babies.

Gestational diabetes is a temporary form of diabetes that develops during pregnancy, but usually disappears after the baby is born. The condition can develop when the mother's body is unable to produce enough insulin to meet the increasing needs of their developing baby. Insulin levels can also be affected by pregnancy hormones, which can limit its production.

Controlling your condition with a good gestational diabetes diet plan is crucial for the health of mother and baby. Nutritionist Bridget Swinney says;

“When large amounts of glucose accumulate in your blood, it means that your cells aren't getting the fuels they need. High blood sugar can be harmful for you and your developing baby, so it is important to try to control it”.

Consult a dietician to put together your gestational diabetes diet plan

Your gestational diabetes diet plan will depend on a number of factors so it is important to consult a professional to ensure the wellbeing of you and your baby. Your diet plan will be based on the following issues:

- How many calories you need each day
- Your height and weight
- Your level of activity
- The particular needs of your baby
- Your level of glucose intolerance

Another important issue in creating your gestational diabetes diet plan is to include foods that you actually like. Any mother will know that pregnancy is a time when food can

provide enormous comfort, and trying to stick to a strict diabetes diet that does not include foods you enjoy will be very difficult.

Here are some general tips for creating a gestational diabetes diet plan:

1. You will need a good source of calcium for your developing baby, but look for alternatives to milk which contains high levels of lactose, a simple sugar which will increase your blood sugar level. Two or three small glasses of milk a day are the maximum for your gestational diabetes diet plan
2. Eat small meals and snacks throughout the day instead of big meals that will suddenly increase your blood sugar levels. Towards the end of your pregnancy small meals will be more comfortable for you to eat anyway.
3. Don't skip meals, and make sure you eat breakfast, even if you have morning sickness, as your blood sugar levels are at their most irregular first thing in the morning.
4. General pregnancy nutrition advice may recommend fruit juice and flavored teas. These should not form part of your gestational diabetes diet plan as they can increase your blood sugar very quickly.