



Healthy eating for diabetes in pregnancy

What you need to know

Introduction

This booklet guides you to make healthy eating choices during and after your pregnancy.

If you have diabetes in pregnancy, it is important that you:


- check the amount of carbohydrate foods you eat each day
- have a regular meal pattern of 3 meals and up to 3 snacks per day
- avoid gaining too much weight
- do 30 minutes of regular exercise or activity every day.

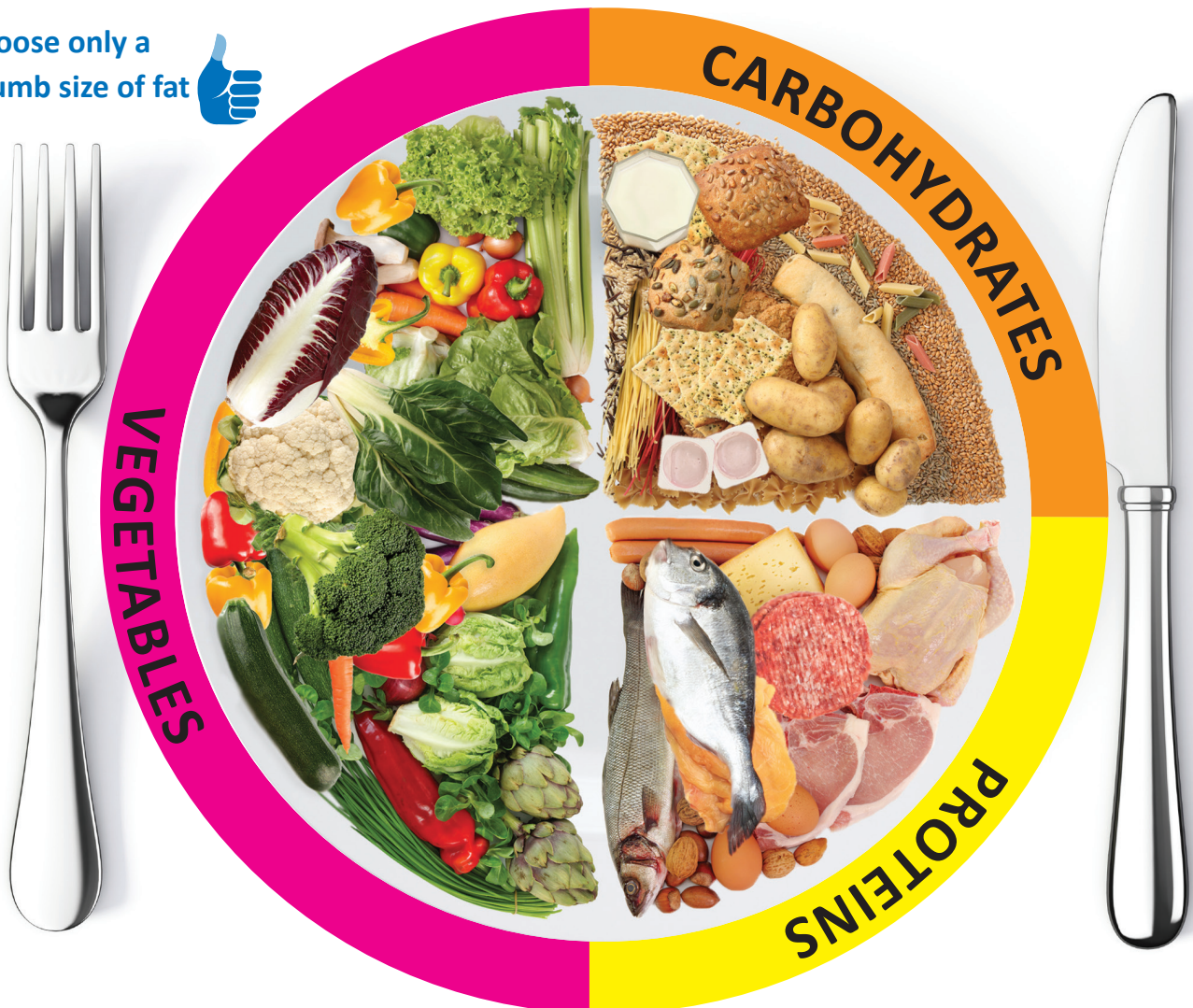
What you need to know

The food you eat is made up of four groups:

- carbohydrates
- proteins
- vegetables
- fats

Your body needs a balance of all of these to grow a healthy baby.

Choose only a
thumb size of fat 



Healthy weight gain during pregnancy

Healthy eating in pregnancy is important, but you do not need to eat for two.

The table below shows you the ideal weight gain depending on your BMI (calculated from your pre-pregnancy weight and height). Talk to your LMC or dietitian about the ideal weight gain for you.

| Pre-pregnancy or early pregnancy (less than 10 weeks) BMI (kg/m ²) | Total weight gain | Your recommended weight gain is: |
|--|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Underweight (<18.5) | 12.5 kg–18 kg | |
| Healthy weight (18.5 - 24.9) | 11.5 kg–16 kg | |
| Overweight (25.0 - 29.9) | 7 kg–11.5 kg | |
| Obese (≥ 30.0) | 5 kg–9 kg | |

Source: Healthy weight gain during pregnancy (Ministry of Health)



<http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/pregnancy/healthy-weight-gain-during-pregnancy>

Activity during pregnancy

What you need to know:

Women who do regular activity or exercise in pregnancy, report feeling better during their pregnancy than women who do not. Regular activity or exercise helps to control diabetes by:

- lowering blood glucose levels
- preventing you from gaining too much weight in pregnancy.

Tips:

- aim for 30 minutes of light exercise on most days
- try walking rather than taking transport, or climbing the stairs instead of taking the lift. House work also counts as activity
- try other types of activity such as walking groups, swimming or pregnancy fitness classes
- if you are currently exercising regularly, talk to your LMC about how you can continue to do this safely during your pregnancy
- ask your LMC or dietitian for a green prescription, as this can help you plan your activity and offer support.



Carbohydrates

What you need to know:

- carbohydrate foods break down into glucose (blood sugar) in the body. Eating too much carbohydrate will make your blood glucose too high
- it is important for you and baby that you do not reduce your carbohydrates too much. The advice in this booklet and your dietitian will help you get a healthy balance.

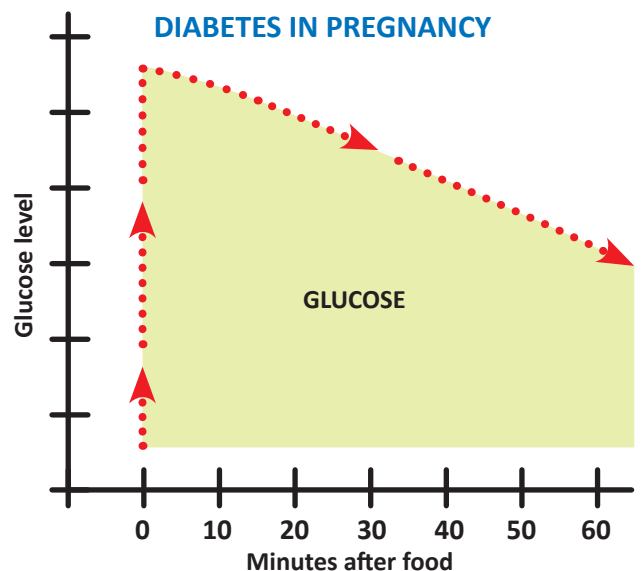
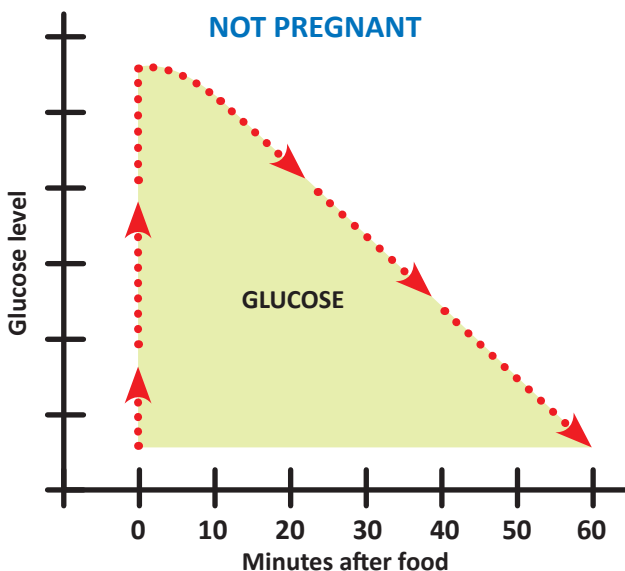
Why are carbohydrates important to me and my baby?

- carbohydrates provide energy for you and baby. If you do not eat enough you may become tired and lack energy, while baby may not have the energy needed to grow well
- carbohydrate foods come with essential vitamins and minerals.

What happens when I eat carbohydrates?

When you eat carbohydrates, they are broken down by your body into glucose and then released into your bloodstream. When glucose levels in your blood rise, your body releases more insulin. This insulin helps move the glucose out of your bloodstream and into your body's cells, where it can be used for energy.

With hormone changes during pregnancy, insulin does not always work to keep glucose levels normal. High blood glucose levels during pregnancy can cause problems including a large baby, premature baby, birth complications and a baby with low blood glucose levels after birth.





What carbohydrates to eat

Breads and cereals:



pasta



oats



cereals



wheat tortilla



taco shell



steam buns



basmati rice



thick congee



wheat biscuits



whole grain bread



small dumplings



noodles



roti



whole grain crackers



popcorn

Starchy vegetables:



potatoes



parsnips



kumura



yam



taro



lotus root



water chestnut



cassava



green banana

Legumes – these have little effect on blood glucose:



beans



chickpeas



soybeans



lentils



corn



Proteins

What you need to know:

- proteins build and repair body tissue
- lean meats, chicken and fish are a good source of iron.
- beans are a great source of protein for vegetarians. They also contain carbohydrates



Fats

What you need to know:

- eating too much fat can quickly lead to weight gain
- unsaturated fats contain important vitamins and minerals so it is important to eat a small amount of these every day.









Vegetables

What you need to know:

- vegetables contain lots of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants
- most vegetables do not affect your blood glucose levels because they do not contain carbohydrates.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| cabbage | broccoli | celery | turnip | bean sprouts |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| courgettes | capsicum | tomato | kai-lan | okra |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| lettuce | eggplant | green beans | choko | bamboo shoots |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| cauliflower | mushrooms | cucumber | asparagus | onion |

Eating lots of these can increase your blood glucose:

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| pumpkin | peas | carrots | beetroot |

Unhealthy foods

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| fries | doughnut | coconut milk/cream |
| bacon and cured meat | pork crackling | butter |
| fast foods | ice cream | chocolate |
| sugary foods | deep fried foods | microwave popcorn |
| biscuits | crisps | pizza |

Drinks

Drink these freely:



plain water, soda water, water flavoured with fresh lemon or cucumber

Drink these occasionally:



tea, coffee, herbal tea (check with your dietitian which are suitable)

Avoid these drinks:



milkshake, fruit juices, fizzy drinks cordial, sports drinks and alcohol

Artificial sweeteners

What you need to know:

The following artificial sweeteners are **NOT** recommended for use in pregnancy. Check packaging to ensure they are not contained in foods you are eating: Cyclamate (952), Saccharin or Sucaryl (954).

Some products which MAY contain these are: Jelly, diet or no sugar foods, powdered drinks, soda stream low calories and sugar free drinks.

Snack options (choose 1-2)

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| nuts | vegetable sticks with cottage cheese | edamame beans in shells | rice crackers with toppings | trim cappuccino, flat white or latte (decaf) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| milk | yogurt | custard | popcorn | crackers/low fat cheese |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| grapes | apple | kiwifruit | mandarins | cherries |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| banana | berries | water melon | lychee | orange |

Meal plans

Here are sample meal plans. Adapt and make your own from the guidelines to suite your requirements.

| | BREAKFAST | | LUNCH | | DINNER |
|----------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Option 1 | 1 cup cooked porridge, made with low fat milk. 1 serving of fruit | Morning snack (see snack options above) | 2 slices of wholegrain bread, vegetable soup 2 small mandarins | Afternoon snack (see snack options above) | Meat or Vegetarian curry with 2 roti/chapatti 1 small cup or rice, or potato (if no legumes/chickpeas in curry) |
| Option 2 | 2 weetbix, 1/2 cup canned fruit in natural juice 1 pottle of yoghurt | | 1 large green banana, fish cooked with vegetables or salad | | Chicken soup, 2-3 small potatoes / kumara or taro, taro leaves, tomato, cucumber |
| Option 3 | 1 cup of cooked rice or 2 cups of egg noodles with lean meat or 1 egg mixed with non-starchy vegetables 1/2 an orange | | 1 slice of wholegrain bread, 1/2 cup of baked beans, 1 grilled tomato 1 poached egg | | Stir-fry with tofu or skinless chicken or lean meat 2 cups of egg noodles with mixed vegetables |
| | | | | | Evening snack (see snack options above) |

Meal plans

| | BREAKFAST | | LUNCH | | DINNER | |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|-------|-----------------|--------|---------------|
| Monday | | Morning snack | | Afternoon snack | | Evening snack |
| Tuesday | | Morning snack | | Afternoon snack | | Evening snack |
| Wednesday | | Morning snack | | Afternoon snack | | Evening snack |
| Thursday | | Morning snack | | Afternoon snack | | Evening snack |
| Friday | | Morning snack | | Afternoon snack | | Evening snack |
| Saturday | | Morning snack | | Afternoon snack | | Evening snack |
| Sunday | | Morning snack | | Afternoon snack | | Evening snack |



Other resources

Eating for Healthy Pregnant Women (Ministry of Health)
Ask for a copy from your LMC or Dietician.

<https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/eating-healthy-pregnant-womenng%C4%81-kai-totika-m%C4%81-te-wahine-hap%C5%AB>



Food Safety in Pregnancy (NZ Food Safety Authority).
Ask for a copy from your LMC or Dietician.

<http://foodsmart.govt.nz/information-for/pregnant-women/>



What you can do to delay or prevent type 2 diabetes after your baby is born

You have a higher chance of developing type 2 diabetes in the future, so your choices now can make a difference. Here are some ways you can make positive changes for you, your children and your whānau/family.

Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding may reduce your child's risk of being overweight and developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Healthy eating and regular exercise

- The healthy eating practices introduced in this booklet should be continued after your pregnancy.
- Make healthy food choices, have smaller food portions.
- Be active at least 30 minutes, five days per week.
- Encourage your family to follow a healthy lifestyle too.



Waitemata
District Health Board

Best Care for Everyone

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