

# Lifestyle for a Healthy Pregnancy

High-quality nutrition and daily exercise habits are the foundation for lifelong health — for you and your baby. Along with daily physical activity, follow these six nutrition tips.



1. Drink mostly water or other calorie-free beverages. Avoid sugary-sweetened drinks.



2. Eat mostly fiber-rich plant foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Think of meat as a garnish or side dish instead of the main course.



3. Eat up to 12 ounces (about the size of four decks of cards) per week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Choose fish that are high in omega-3 fats such as salmon, albacore tuna, trout and sardines.



4. Bake, roast, stir fry, broil, grill, boil, poach, steam or sauté your foods instead of frying them.



5. Eat less food with added sugar with the goal of less than six teaspoons (24 grams) per day.



6. Avoid ultra-processed food which can contribute to high blood sugar and excess weight gain in pregnancy.



Some foods to avoid include:

fruit juice, cold cereal, breakfast bars, instant oatmeal, frozen desserts, candy, bagels, potato chips, muffins, donuts, cake, cookies, flavored coffee drinks, chocolate milk

## Benefits of a healthy lifestyle for everyone:



- Reduces stress
- Improves sleep quality
- Enhances mood
- Improves lifelong health
- Reduces risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease
- Improves blood pressure
- Supports healthy weight

## When you are pregnant, a healthy lifestyle lowers your risk for:

- Cesarean delivery
- Gestational diabetes
- High blood pressure, preeclampsia and preterm birth
- Excess weight gain during pregnancy
- Weight retention after pregnancy

## Exercise

Physical activity is like free medicine for your body! Keep in mind, even if you just have five minutes, a little exercise is always better than none. We recommend:

- Aim for at least 150 minutes of cardio per week, including: walking, swimming, biking, gardening, vacuuming, taking stairs, dancing, playing outside.
- Try not to go more than 2 days in a row without physical activity
- Move more throughout your day by parking far away, taking the stairs, and walking during work breaks
- Engage in muscle-strengthening activities at least twice per week, such as: wall push-ups, counter squats, light weights, calf raises, wall sits.



# Gestational Diabetes

CENTER FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

The good news is that the eating plan to help manage your blood sugar is the same high-quality foods we recommended for all pregnant women. You still need high-quality carbohydrates in your meals and snacks. The difference is that now it's also important to think about how you eat them (with what, and when) to help your body handle them better.

## Tips to keep the after-meal blood sugar rise lower and slower:

- Your body has more difficulty processing carbs in the morning. Stick to one or two portions of carbs at breakfast, and skip fruit and milk first thing in the morning.
- Have fruit for snacks and be sure to combine it with protein.
- Skip juice and dried fruit.
- Replace half of your portion of rice or potatoes with lentils or other legumes.
- Engage in daily physical activity right before or after eating.
- Eat meals like stir fry that mix all components together.
- Eat your food in order. Start with **salad** or other **“free” vegetables** first, and eat **carbs** last.

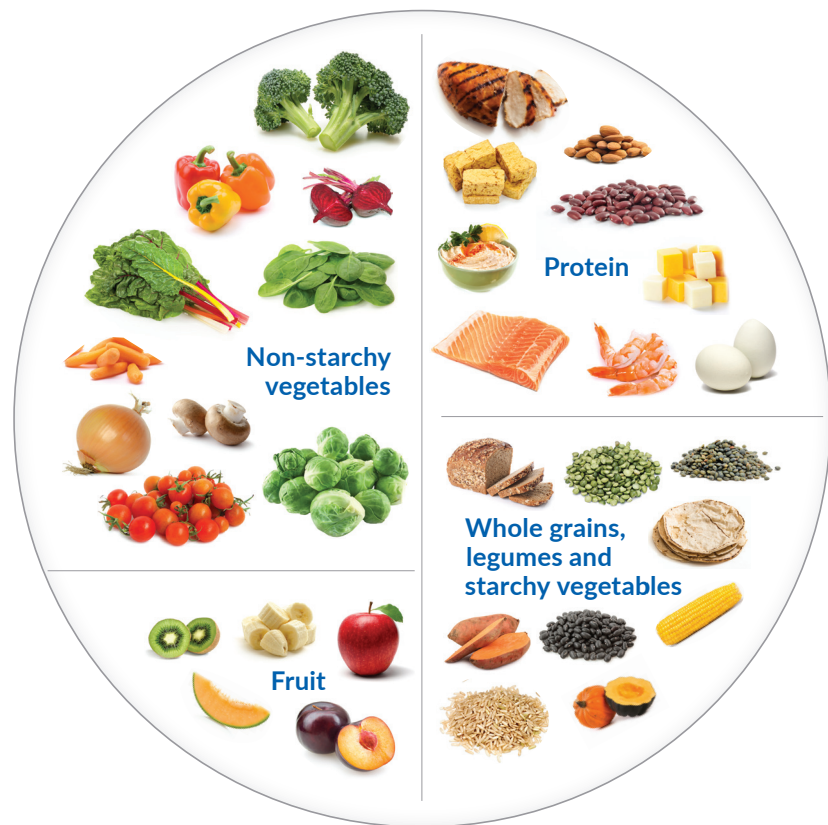


## Tips to improve fasting blood sugar:

- Eat dinner earlier.
- Engage in evening physical activity.
- Eat a lower-carb protein snack at bedtime.
- Aim for 8-10 hours of fasting overnight before checking blood sugar upon waking.
- Optimize sleep habits.
- Manage stress. Engage in mindfulness exercises, yoga, reading, or other relaxing activities.

My plan: \_\_\_\_\_

# My Pregnancy Plate Food Choice Guide



## Diabetes and Pregnancy Program

High-quality eating for before, during and after pregnancy








# My Meal Plan

Creating a meal plan for your pregnancy (and beyond!) is a great way to always have healthy ideas and options at your fingertips. In these sections you'll find all sorts of foods that can be part of a healthy lifestyle and how to recognize a carb portion. When creating ideas for meals and snacks, focus on high-quality foods, portion size, and a mix of all the food groups.

Lunch time \_\_\_\_\_


Total carbs \_\_\_\_\_



FOOD GROUP	NUMBER OF SERVINGS	MEAL IDEAS
Carbs	Starch	
	Fruit	
	Milk	
Vegetables		
Protein		
Fats		

Afternoon Snack


Carbs \_\_\_\_\_



Snack ideas:

Breakfast time \_\_\_\_\_


Total carbs \_\_\_\_\_



FOOD GROUP	NUMBER OF SERVINGS	MEAL IDEAS
Carbs	Starch	
	Fruit	
	Milk	
Vegetables		
Protein		
Fats		

Morning Snack


Carbs \_\_\_\_\_



Snack ideas:

Dinner time \_\_\_\_\_


Total carbs \_\_\_\_\_



FOOD GROUP	NUMBER OF SERVINGS	MEAL IDEAS
Carbs	Starch	
	Fruit	
	Milk	
Vegetables		
Protein		
Fats		

Bedtime Snack

Carbs \_\_\_\_\_



Snack ideas:

# Healthy Food Choices

There are high-quality, nutrient-dense options in every food group. Eat mostly these foods to give your body everything it needs to manage all of its important processes. This is the key for promoting health throughout your life.

Check food labels!

1 carb portion  
= 15 grams

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55 g)</b>
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>% Daily Value*</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	5%
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	7%
Dietary Fiber 4g	13%
Total Sugars 12g	14%
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2%	

## CARBOHYDRATES

### STARCH

Choose mostly whole grain items.

1 small serving is a carb portion:



1/3 cup is a carb portion:



1/2 cup is a carb portion:



1 cup is a carb portion:



### FRUIT

1 small serving is a carb portion:



3/4 cup = 1 carb



1 cup = 1 carb



1 1/4 cup = 1 carb



### MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

Choose lowfat or nonfat options.

1 cup = 1 carb



1 cup = 1/2 carb



For non-dairy alternatives like soy, almond, and oat milks, or flavored yogurts, choose brands with 15 grams or less of total carbs per serving and less than 8 grams of added sugar.

### NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

Think of these as free and eat them often!



### PROTEIN

Include a protein source at each meal and snack.



Some plant-based proteins include high-quality carbs — see starch.



Limit these choices:

Fatty meats like beef, pork and sausage

### FATS

Choose mostly unsaturated fats.



Limit saturated fats:

Bacon, butter, creamer, cream cheese, sour cream, coconut and palm oils