



Saskatchewan
Health Authority

Healthy Eating

For Diabetes in Pregnancy



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saskhealthauthority.ca

Healthy eating is important for a healthy pregnancy and is the foundation for managing diabetes in pregnancy.

Plan Your Carbohydrate Intake Carefully

Carbohydrate (carb) includes starches, sugars, and dietary fibre. Starches and sugars raise blood sugar, but dietary fibre does not raise blood sugar.

Examples of foods that contain carbs are grain products, starchy vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, corn), pulses (dried peas, dried beans, chick peas, lentils), fruit and fruit juices, milk and yogurt, and sweets.

Carb foods provide energy and many important nutrients for you and your growing baby. Carbs are part of a healthy diet and should be included at each meal and each snack.

Spread your carb intake throughout the day. Eating too much carbs at any one time may result in a high blood sugar. A general suggestion to start with is:

Breakfast	45 to 60 grams carb (3 to 4 carb choices) and protein
Midmorning Snack	15 to 30 grams carb (1 to 2 carb choices) and protein
Lunch	45 to 60 grams carb (3 to 4 carb choices) and protein
Midafternoon Snack	15 to 30 grams carb (1 to 2 carb choices) and protein
Supper	45 to 60 grams carb (3 to 4 carb choices) and protein
Bedtime Snack	15 to 30 grams carb (1 to 2 carb choices) and protein

Your dietitian may suggest changes, if needed, based on your nutritional needs and blood sugar readings.

Help Control Blood Sugar by Including Protein, Fibre, and Fat

Protein

Protein may slow the rise in blood sugar after eating. Include a protein source at each meal and each snack. Examples of protein sources are lean meat, fish, and poultry; eggs; peanut butter; nuts and seeds; tofu; cheese; and cottage cheese. Examples of protein sources which contain carbs are dried peas, dried beans, lentils, hummus, milk, and yogurt.

Fibre

Fibre may slow the rise in blood sugar after eating. Choose higher fibre foods more often. Examples of foods that contain fibre are whole grain products, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, dried peas, dried beans, lentils, and hummus.

Fat

Fat may slow the rise in blood sugar after eating. Fat helps control hunger and can be included as part of your balanced intake. Examples of healthy fats are soft-tub non-hydrogenated margarine, oils such as olive and canola, avocado, olives, nuts, and seeds.

Meal Planning Tips

- Include grain products or starches, such as whole grain breads, cereal, pasta, potato or rice with each meal. These provide fibre and many nutrients. ($\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate should be grains and starches).
- Most vegetables are low in carb and do not affect blood sugars. They provide fibre and many nutrients. ($\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate should be vegetables).
- Fruit is a great choice for dessert or as part of a snack, and provides fibre and many nutrients.
- Milk and alternatives help to meet calcium and protein requirements. Choose lower fat milk products for heart health.
- Lean meats and alternatives help to meet iron and protein requirements. Trim visible fat, and choose leaner cuts for heart health. Include fish that is higher in essential fatty acids and low in mercury (example: salmon, rainbow trout, lake trout, herring, canned light tuna, Atlantic mackerel, sardines). ($\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate should be meat and alternatives).

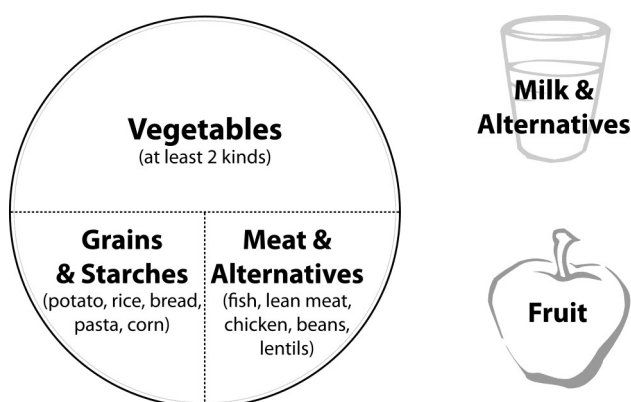


Diagram courtesy of MEDEC and Clipart.

Ideas for Healthy Snacks

The snacks below contain 15 grams of carbs and a source of protein:

- 1 slice whole grain toast with peanut butter, cheese, sliced meat, or egg
- 1 serving of fruit with cheese or nuts
- 3 cups of popcorn, or 1 serving of crackers, or 1 plain granola bar, or 1 medium bran muffin with cheese or peanut butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of plain or flavoured yogurt (sweetened with artificial sweetener) or 1 cup of milk

Carbohydrate Content of Foods

The tables on the next page specify carbohydrate content of a variety of foods and beverages. If you have any questions about carb content of specific foods, feel free to contact your dietitian.

Fruit and Vegetables	15 grams of carb per serving = 1 carb choice	
	1 small banana or pear 1 medium apple or orange 1 large nectarine or peach 2 kiwi or plums 1 c melon or blueberries 2 c raspberries or strawberries 15 grapes or cherries ¾ c pineapple ½ grapefruit or mango 2 tbsp raisins or 3 dates ½ c canned fruit or applesauce ½ c fruit juice	Most vegetables contain very little carb, are very nutritious, and can be counted as “free” choices. The following vegetables, if eaten in the serving listed, provide 15 g carb. If smaller portions are eaten, count them as a “free” serving: 2 c carrots 1 c parsnips or rutabaga or beets or peas 1 c acorn or butternut squash 1½ c vegetable broth type soup 1 c stewed tomatoes or tomato soup

Grain Products and Starches	15 grams of carb per serving = 1 carb choice	
	1 slice whole grain bread 1 roti or chapatti (6 inch) ⅓ c cooked converted or parboiled brown rice or barley ½ c cooked whole grain pasta 2 small perogies ⅓ c sweet potato or yam ½ c potato (skin on) or corn 1 whole wheat waffle or pancake (4 inch) 3 c plain popcorn 1 c soup (noodle, rice, barley, potato)	½ bun or ½ English muffin or ½ small bagel ¾ c oatmeal or ¾ c oat bran or ½ c Red River™ cereal ½ pita or ½ naan or 1 whole grain tortilla (6 inch) ½ c cereal (All Bran Buds w Psyllium™, Life™, Grape Nuts™, Muesli, Mini Wheats™, Shredded Wheat™, Just Right™) 5 Triscuits™ or 4 rectangle Melba toast 7 whole wheat unsalted soda crackers 2 Ryvita™ or Wasa™ crackers 1 plain low fat granola bar 1 medium bran or oatbran or oatmeal muffin

Milk and Alternatives	15 grams of carb per serving = 1 carb choice	0 grams carb, but contain protein and calories as well as fats that affect cholesterol levels. Choose lower fat choices more often.
	1 c milk (skim, 1%) or soy milk ½ c choc. milk or flavoured soy milk ¾ c plain or flavoured yogurt (no sugar added) (less than 2% M.F.) ½ c regular flavoured yogurt ½ c milk based puddings 1 c milk based or cream soup	½ c cottage cheese (dry, 1% M.F.) 1½ oz hard cheese (less than 20% M.F.) 2 processed cheese slices (low fat)

Note: c = cup = 250 mL or 8 ounces; tbsp = tablespoon = 15 mL; g = gram

Meat and Alternatives	15 grams of carb per serving = 1 carb choice	0 grams carb, but contain protein and calories as well as fats that affect cholesterol levels. Choose lower fat and leaner items.
	½ c dried beans or dried peas or lentils (such as lima beans, chick peas, split peas) ⅔ c hummus ¾ c split pea soup or 1 c lentil soup These foods are low in fat and high in fibre. Choose them in place of meats more often.	2½ oz beef or fish or poultry or pork (lean) ¼ c nuts or seeds (unsalted) 2 tbsp peanut butter 2 eggs ½ c salmon or tuna or sardines ¾ c tofu Choose plant based foods and fish more often to protect your blood vessels for heart health.

How to read food labels to count carbohydrates

Step 1

Look at the serving size. The amount of carbohydrate listed is for the serving size given. Are you eating more, less or the same? Compare your serving size to figure out the amount of carbohydrates you are eating.

Step 2

Look at the number of total carbohydrates per serving (not just sugar). This number includes sugar, fibre and starch (starch is often not listed separately).



Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive	
Per 2 slices (90 g) / par 2 tranches (90 g)	
Amount Teneur	%Daily Value %valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 170	
Fat / Lipides 2.5 g	4 %
Saturated / saturés 0.5 g	
+ Trans / trans 0 g	3 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	0 %
Sodium / Sodium 200 mg	8 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 36 g	12 %
Fibre / Fibres 6 g	24 %
Sugars / Sucres 3 g	
Protein / Protéines 8 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	2 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	2 %
Iron / Fer	15 %



Step 3

Subtract fibre from the number of total carbohydrate. Fibre does not raise blood sugars so it should be subtracted from the total carbohydrate.

Example:

36 g total carbohydrate
 - 6 g fibre
 30 g carbohydrate that will affect blood sugars

Other Tips for a Healthy Pregnancy

- Avoid alcohol of any kind during pregnancy.
- Limit caffeine to **300 mg or less** per day. Use only herbal teas considered safe in pregnancy such as ginger, orange or lemon peel, peppermint, and rose hip. Caffeine content of some common sources include:
 - 1 c (250 mL) coffee = 108 to 180 mg caffeine
 - 1 can (355 mL) diet cola = 50 mg caffeine
 - 1 c (250 mL) black tea = 28 to 64 mg caffeine
 - 2 oz (60 g) milk chocolate = 3 to 20 mg caffeine
 - 1 c (250 mL) green tea = 33 mg caffeine
 - 2 oz (60 g) dark chocolate = 40 to 50 mg caffeine
- Take your prenatal multivitamin or other required supplements daily, as directed by your doctor. In pregnancy important nutrients include: folic acid, calcium, vitamin D, iron, and essential fatty acids. Your dietitian can help make sure you get enough of these nutrients.
- Sweets or desserts may be included in moderation as part of a healthy diet, if blood sugars are well controlled.
- Avoid sweetened beverages such as slush drinks, regular soft drinks, or regular iced tea as they are very high in carbohydrates and low in nutritional value.
- In pregnancy, artificial sweeteners and foods or beverages containing them are safe in moderate amounts.
- Regular physical activity (for example, a 10 to 15 minute walk after meals) will help you achieve your blood sugar goals. It will also help decrease stress, prevent constipation and assist with a healthy rate of weight gain. Speak to your doctor and diabetes educators about a physical activity plan that is right for you.
- Regular blood sugar monitoring is important to make sure your blood sugars are on target. Adjustments can be made to your meal and activity plans if needed.
- In spite of best efforts, some women do not achieve desired blood sugar goals. Oral medications or adding or adjusting insulin may be needed to keep blood sugars under control. Your diabetes team is here to help throughout your pregnancy.

Contact your local Diabetes Education Program for more information.

NOTES:

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Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

PIER—Patient Information and Education Resource

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