

Normalizing Blood Sugar

Preventing & Treating Gestational Diabetes

What are the benefits of maintaining stable blood sugar levels?

- Feel better and have more energy
- Minimize nausea
- Minimize strain on internal organs and body chemistry
- Minimize chances of hypertension
- Maintain stable internal body chemistry and prevent candida/yeast growth
- Maintain mineral stores. Sugar is associated with depleting minerals like calcium.
- Grow a smaller baby, have an easier labor, increase your chance of spontaneous vaginal delivery without the need for intervention
- Minimize weight gain without “dieting”
- Return to your pre-pregnancy/ healthy weight easier and more naturally

How can I promote normal blood sugars?

Focus on a variety of healthy foods

As always, eat a variety of wholesome foods: fresh vegetables, fruits, grains, beans, quality dairy and meat (unless you are vegan/vegetarian), as well as unrefined oils and fat.

Balance your meals

Foods should be partnered together for taste, enjoyment but also to reduce a glycemic rise. For example, combining carbohydrates with protein (salad and fish, rice and chicken), and fruit with fat (pear with nuts, banana and yogurt). These combinations allow sugars to be released slowly, instead of all at once.

Eat small frequent meals

Eat smaller portions more frequently. Take the food you might normally eat in three meals and divide it into six, evenly spaced throughout the day. This can reduce digestive stress, and allow your meal to digest more easily, as well as keeping your blood sugar from having wide fluctuations throughout the day.

Be active every day

Developing a daily exercise program is as important as eating well. Being active helps in two ways. First, every time you exercise, you use up blood sugar and keep levels lower for several hours. Exercising for a few minutes after every meal (even just a ten minute walk around the block), when your blood sugar levels are elevated, is an excellent practice. Secondly, exercise that builds muscle will create more cells that use up blood sugar, even while you are sleeping.

Eat less processed, closer to whole and raw

Eat foods in their natural unprocessed form. For example, whole fruit causes a lower blood sugar rise than fruit juice. Grains cooked until they are mushy cause a greater blood sugar rise than when they are al dente. Processed foods are in a way pre-digested and breakdown much faster than their whole counterparts, thus quickly creating a sugar rise. For example, white rice will digest quicker than brown rice.

Reduce stress

Reduce stress, which causes blood sugar to rise. Meditate, breathe, do yoga, get a massage, take a bath with lavender & Epsom salts, ask for support, or whatever it takes.

Take a good quality prenatal supplement

Taking a good quality prenatal supplement helps your body cope with the physiological stress of pregnancy. To help specifically with blood sugar control, choose a prenatal supplement that has about 20mg of zinc and 200 mg of chromium. Both can be toxic in large dosages, so more is not better. B-vitamins and vitamins C and E are also important.

At the same time, it is always better to get your nutrients from whole food, so do not count on your supplement to cover gaps if you are skipping meals or eating fast food.

Eat some Omega-3s every day

Make sure you get a source of Omega-3 fatty acids every day. These help the insulin in your body work to lower high blood sugar and minimize weight gain. Omega-3 fatty acids are also

essential for healthy fetal and infant brain development and for preventing preeclampsia and premature births.

Good sources of Omega-3s include:

- a serving of cold water fatty fish such as salmon, halibut, mackerel, or sardines
- 3T of ground flax seeds
- 1T of flax oil
- fish oil supplements (DHA plus EPA)
- Grass fed meat & dairy

Choose healthy fats

Choose cold pressed olive oil, coconut oil, ghee or butter over refined vegetable oils.

Reduce the amount of harmful fats you eat, such as “vegetable oils” and fried foods. Also avoid trans-fatty acids and partially hydrogenated fatty acids, which are found in most margarines and commercial crackers, cookies, cereals, and many other processed foods.

Choose lower Glycemic Index carbs

Choose foods with a lower glycemic index [see below]. Only carbohydrate foods raise blood sugar. Protein and fats don't. But please remember that a diet of all proteins and fats is not healthy; you need the fiber and nutrients of carbohydrate foods.

Avoid food binges

Be aware that binging – eating a lot of carbs at once, especially high GI foods like fruit, bread, and pasta – can cause sharp rises in blood sugar. Whenever you have a sugar craving or an urge to binge, think about whether you have eaten enough protein in the last day – maybe you are just hungry for more nutrients. Also consider whether you might be dehydrated, as sugar cravings can be disguising thirst.

Diabetes Prevention

What about low Glycemic Index foods?

Some carbohydrate foods cause a significantly higher rise in blood sugar than others do. Predicting which ones will do this is not easy, so you will need to look them up on tables of what is called glycemic index (GI).

LOW GI (55 or less) Choose most often	MEDIUM GI (56-99) Chose more often	HIGH GI (70 or more) Choose less often
BREADS: 100% stone ground whole wheat Heavy mixed grain CEREALS: All Bran Bran Buds with Psyllium Oat bran GRAINS: Parboiled or converted rice Barley Bulgar Pasta/noodles OTHER: Sweet potato Yam Lentils Chickpeas	BREADS: Whole wheat Pumpnickel/Rye Pita CEREALS: Grapenuts Puffed wheat Oatmeal Quick oats GRAINS: Basmati rice Brown rice Couscous OTHER: Potato, new/white Sweet corn Popcorn Stoned Wheat Thins Rye crisps Black been soup Green pea soup	BREADS: White bread Kaiser roll Bagel, white CEREALS: Bran flakes Corn flakes Rice Krispies Cheerios GRAINS: Short-grain rice OTHER: Potato, baking French fries Pretzels Rice cakes Soda crackers

High GI foods

Foods that cause an especially large rise in blood sugar include;

- Any bread, cracker, cookie or pastry made from wheat flour, whether that flour is

white or whole wheat. Bread with rye flour as the first ingredient is better, as is bread with a significant proportion of unground grains (such as whole wheat berries or rye berries or cracked wheat), oatmeal, seeds, nuts or barley

- Most commercial breakfast cereals.
- Potatoes, especially the large baking kind. Small new potatoes, slightly undercooked,
- are much better
- Watermelon and tropical fruits, especially overripe ones such as bananas with brown spots on the skin. Many other fruits, including cherries, grapefruit, and dried apricots, especially if not overripe are much better. Greenish bananas are okay.

This doesn't mean that you can never eat these foods again. It would probably be okay to eat small servings of them occasionally (like one slice of bread or one pancake, several times a week), especially when eaten with protein foods or with carbohydrates with a lower glycemic index.

Intermediate GI foods

Rice is an intermediate glycemic index food. Eating it slightly undercooked, rather than mushy, is better. Parboiled and basmati varieties are better than others. Sticky rice, puffed rice cereal, and rice cakes, however, raise blood sugar a lot. You might try substituting barley sometimes, which takes a long time to cook, but tastes great (even for breakfast), and has a very low GI. You can make enough for several days and then heat up portions in the microwave.

Low GI foods

All watery vegetables (as opposed to starchy ones like potatoes and parsnips) can be eaten in unlimited quantities. Beans are a carbohydrate food (also containing good protein) with a very low GI, and so a great food.

Adding fat or protein to your meal will lower the GI index of a higher rated food. For example, a baked potato is a high GI food. When eaten with butter, a salad as a side and a chicken breast, the meal becomes well balanced and wholesome.

Diabetes Prevention

How can a nutritionist help me?

A nutrition consult is not just for those who have weight problems or are diagnosed with Gestational Diabetes. There are numerous issues a nutritionist can help with:

General

- Motivation & inspiration
- Recipe ideas
- General education
- Low energy
- Genetic susceptibility to disease
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Addiction withdrawal

Imbalances

- Frequent illness
- Pre-eclampsia
- Edema
- Itchy skin

- Abnormal weight gain
- Abnormal circulation
- Autoimmune disease
- Allergies

Lab Results

- Iron deficiency or anemia
- Gestational diabetes
- Spilling protein in urine
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Frequent yeast infections

Digestive Issues

- Sluggish digestion
- Bloating
- Excessive gas
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Cravings
- Acid reflux
- Irritable bowel

Postpartum

- Postpartum meal planning
- Nursing nutrition
- Infant nutrition concerns
- Colic