My Diabetic Meal Plan during Pregnancy

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

When you have diabetes and are pregnant, you need to eat small meals and snacks throughout the day to help control your blood sugar. This also helps you get in enough nutrients for a healthy pregnancy.

Calories come from carbohydrate, protein or fat. Carbohydrates have the largest and quickest effect on blood sugar. High carbohydrate food groups include:

- Starch, which includes whole grain foods and starchy vegetables
- Milk and yogurt
- Fruit

By following a carbohydrate controlled diet, you can control your blood sugar better. **This is important for you and your baby.**

The plan

- **Your meal plan will have 3 meals and 3 snacks a day.** The goal is to keep your blood sugar at a healthy level all day long. Do not skip meals.
- **Each meal and snack should have at least one serving of carbohydrate** from the Starch, Fruit or Milk Groups **and one serving of protein** from the Meat / Meat Substitute Group.
  - **The amount of carbohydrate you need is based on your height, weight, activity level, blood sugar control and pregnancy.** Your dietitian or nurse will tell you the amount of carbohydrate you need in your diet.
- You will want to eat your meals and snacks at about the same times each day. This will help to keep your blood sugar controlled for your health and the growth of your baby.

Carbohydrate counting

Carbohydrate counting, also called carb counting, is a meal planning tool for people with diabetes. Carb counting involves using food labels and estimating portion sizes of foods to keep track of the amount of carbohydrates you eat each day.

Carbohydrates are one of the main nutrients found in food and drinks. Protein and fat are the other main nutrients. Carbohydrates include starches, sugars and fiber. Carb counting can help to control your blood sugar because carbohydrates affect your blood sugar more than other nutrients.

How to count carbohydrates

When reading food labels, use these 4 tips to help you count carbohydrates:

1. **Check the serving size.** All nutritional information on the label is based on one serving. Be sure to look at the common measure, such as cups or tablespoons. The grams (g) listed are the weight of the serving.

   The serving size for the sample product on the next page is 1 cup (228 g).

2. **Look for total carbohydrates in grams.** This includes the fiber, sugars and other carbohydrates in the food. Use this number when counting carbohydrates. **Do not look at sugars alone. You need to consider total carbohydrates in a product.**

   There are 31 grams of carbohydrate in this product per serving. If you ate 2 servings of this food, you would be getting 62 grams of carbohydrate.

3. **Understand the sugar alcohol rule.** Sugar alcohols, like fiber, are another form of carbohydrate on product labels. Sugar alcohol is not an alcoholic drink. It refers to a specific group of sugars that come from plants and have names, such as xylitol, mannitol or sorbitol. They are in food and drinks because they have fewer calories and do not cause spikes in blood sugar.

   The sugar alcohol rule: if eating a food with sugar alcohols, you can subtract half of the total grams of sugar alcohols listed from the total grams of carbohydrates.

   This sample product label shows there are no sugar alcohols in it.

4. **Compare labels.** First compare the serving sizes of products you eat. Then compare the grams of total carbohydrate. Look at the fiber and sugar content. For some products, like cookies or candy, you will find that sugar-free does not mean carbohydrate-free.

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Carbohydrate serving sizes

If you have a food exchange book or list, you can use it to look up grams of carbohydrate for foods. Otherwise, read the product's food label. If no food label is available, use the estimates on the next pages to calculate the carbohydrate grams for a food. Be aware that carbohydrate amounts can vary greatly between different types of the same food. For example, some breads are 15 grams a slice while others are closer to 25 grams.

Starch Group – 1 serving equals 15 grams of carbohydrate

Choose whole grains over refined grains. 1 serving equals:

- 1 slice of bread or 1 small roll
- ¼ (1 ounce) bagel

- ½ hamburger bun or English muffin
- 1, 6-inch tortilla
- ⅓ cup cooked rice, pasta, barley, quinoa or couscous
- ½ cup cooked bulgur wheat, lentils or legumes (dried beans or peas)
- ½ cup corn, sweet potato or green peas
- 3 ounce baked sweet or white potato with skin
- ½ cup cooked cereal
- ¾ cup unsweetened dry cereal
- ¾ ounce pretzels
- 3 cups hot air popped or microwave popcorn (80% light)

Fruit Group – 1 serving equals 15 grams of carbohydrate

Pregnant women should eat fruit every day. 1 serving equals:

- 1 small apple, orange or nectarine
- ½ cup fresh grapes
- 1 medium peach
- 1 kiwi
- ½ banana, grapefruit, mango or pear
- 1 cup fresh melon, raspberries or strawberries
- ¾ cup fresh pineapple, blueberries or blackberries
- ½ cup canned fruit in juice or light syrup
- ½ cup (4 ounces) fruit juice with no sugar added
- 2 tablespoons dried fruit

Milk Group – 1 serving equals 15 grams of carbohydrate

Pregnant women should drink milk or eat yogurt every day. 1 serving equals:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) fat-free or low-fat milk
- 6 ounces light or plain yogurt
- 1 cup artificially sweetened yogurt

Sweets

Limit the amount of sweets you eat. They are high in carbohydrates, calories and fat. This includes limiting the amount of cake, ice cream, pie, syrup, cookies, candies and doughnuts you eat. Do not add table sugar, honey or other sweeteners to your foods or beverages. Limiting sweets will help to keep your blood sugar under control.

Fats

Limit fried foods in your diet. Try to bake or broil your foods more often.

Moderate fat intake during pregnancy is ideal. Do not follow a very low fat diet. If you have questions about the fat in your diet, talk to your dietitian or nurse.

1 serving equals:

- 1 teaspoon oil (vegetable, corn, canola, olive, etc.)
- 1 teaspoon butter or stick margarine
- 1 teaspoon mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon reduced-fat margarine or mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon salad dressing
- 1 tablespoon cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons light cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons avocado
- 8 large black olives
- 10 large stuffed green olives
- 1 slice bacon

My meal plan

Your dietitian or nurse will fill in the number of servings for each food group along with the total grams of carbohydrate that you need each day. Use this information to create a sample meal plan on the next page, using either a diabetic food exchange list or the food group lists on pages 11 to 14 of this book to choose healthy menu ideas.

Remember:

- **Eat 3 meals and 3 snacks each day.**
- **Each meal and snack should have at least:**
  - **1 serving of carbohydrate** from the Starch, Fruit or Milk Groups, **and**
  - **1 serving of protein** from the Meat / Meat Substitute Group.
- 1 serving of carbohydrate = 1 Starch, 1 Fruit or 1 Milk serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate.
- 1 serving of non-starchy vegetables = 5 grams of carbohydrate.
- **I need about _____ grams of carbohydrate each day.** Be careful to not eat too many carbohydrates to better control your blood sugar level.

Food Group	Servings Per Day
Starch	
Fruit	
Milk	
Vegetables, Non-Starchy	
Meat / Meat Substitutes	
Fat	

My sample meal plan

Meal or Snack	Food Group	Number of Servings	Total grams of carb	Menu Ideas
Breakfast	Starch			
	Milk			
	Meat / Meat Substitutes			
	Fat			
Morning snack	Starch			
	Fruit			
	Milk			
	Vegetables, Non-Starchy			
	Meat / Meat Substitutes			
	Fat			
Lunch	Starch			
	Fruit			
	Milk			
	Vegetables, Non-Starchy			
	Meat / Meat Substitutes			
	Fat			
Afternoon snack	Starch			
	Fruit			
	Milk			
	Vegetables, Non-Starchy			
	Meat / Meat Substitutes			
	Fat			
Dinner	Starch			
	Fruit			
	Milk			
	Vegetables, Non-Starchy			
	Meat / Meat Substitutes			
	Fat			
Evening snack	Starch			
	Fruit			
	Milk			
	Vegetables, Non-Starchy			
	Meat / Meat Substitutes			
	Fat			
My sample meal plan has _____ total grams of carb.				

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