Controlling Blood Sugar

1. Refined sugar, in any form, will cause your blood sugar to rise too high, too fast.
   **Avoid all sugar and sweets.**
   • sugar
   • molasses
   • jam
   • jelly
   • desserts
   • cakes
   • cookies

Read ingredient lists on food labels. Avoid foods if any of the first 4 ingredients are sugar, corn syrup, honey, fructose, or any word ending in “-ose.”

**Use instead:** Equal, Nutra-Sweet (aspartame), or Splenda in moderation

2. **Eating at regular times** helps prevent very low or very high blood sugars.
   • Include 3 meals and 3–4 snacks daily.
   • Try not to go over 3 hours without food during waking hours.
   • Try not to go over 8–10 hours without food between your evening snack and breakfast.

For some pregnant women, the body’s changing hormones and chemistry causes high blood sugars. This is true for you if you had one high blood sugar result during the 3-hour glucose tolerance test (GTT). One high blood sugar result indicates glucose intolerance. Two or more high blood sugar results indicate gestational diabetes.

The good news is, you can help control your blood sugar by the way you eat and exercise. The following tips will help you control your blood sugar.

3. **Know your carbohydrate foods, and how much to eat at each meal and snack.**
   Carbohydrate foods affect your blood sugar; they include:
   • Milk and yogurt
   • Starches
   • Fruits

   • Eat 2 or 3 servings of carbohydrate foods at each meal or snack to start.

4. **Including high fiber foods** everyday helps control blood sugar.
   • Choose non-starchy vegetables and whole grains as often as you can.
   • Choose 2–3 servings of fresh fruit daily, eat one at a time. Eat fruits with other foods, rather than fruit by itself.
5. **Including protein** can also help control blood sugar.
   - Try to include protein foods every time you eat, especially at meals and at your last snack of the day.
   - Good sources of protein are meat, chicken, fish, cheese, cottage cheese, tofu, peanut butter, or nuts.

6. Pregnancy hormones can be at their highest in the morning, making it hard to control blood sugar at that time. You may need to **avoid milk and fruit at breakfast**.
   - Choose starch and protein foods for breakfast instead.
   - Choose milk and fruit later in the day.

7. **Maintaining a healthy weight gain** can often prevent worsening of high blood sugars.
   - Focus on including **enough** whole grains, vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy, and low-fat protein foods.
   - Add or limit fats as weight gain indicates:
     - Avoid fried foods
     - Broil, bake, steam, grill, or boil foods to avoid extra fat

8. **Be cautious about eating out.** Many restaurant foods raise blood sugars, especially fried foods and fast foods.
   - Be aware of portion sizes.
   - Avoid sweet or creamy sauces.
   - Choose restaurants where you have control (salad or sandwich bars), or ones that serve plain meats, starches, and vegetables.

9. **Exercise** helps control blood sugar.
   - Walk 10–20 minutes daily after eating a meal or snack.
   - Talk with your doctor before you start exercising.

**General Healthy Pregnancy Tips**
The following tips should also be kept in mind for a healthy pregnancy:

1. Calcium is very important for bone health in pregnancy. Include 3–4 servings of dairy per day for adequate calcium.
   - 1 serving = 8 oz (1 cup) low-fat or nonfat milk, or 8 oz (1 small container) “light” yogurt.
   - Count milk and yogurt as carbohydrate foods.

2. Drink adequate fluids: at least 8 glasses (8 oz or 1 cup each) daily.
   - This may include water, soup, and non-caffeinated diet drinks.

3. Drink only a moderate amount of caffeinated drinks, such as coffee, tea, and sodas.

4. Avoid alcohol and nicotine.

**The Goal**
Following these diet and exercise tips will help keep your blood sugar level as close to normal as possible. This leads to a healthier outcome for you and your baby.

**Highly Recommended**
Borrow the DVD “Diabetes During Pregnancy—Healthy Changes for a Healthy Baby,” from your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Library.

It is also online at:
permanente.net/homepage/kaiser/pages/F51226.html

**Questions?**
Contact your Kaiser Permanente Ob/Gyn provider by phone or online at members.kp.org