Making Healthy Food Choices When You Have Gestational Diabetes

When you have gestational diabetes, making healthy food choices is one of the best ways to manage your blood glucose while getting enough nutrients for you and your growing baby.

To do this, count carbohydrates, control portion sizes, and choose healthy foods. When you meet with your diabetes care team, you'll learn how to count carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are found in many foods, such as: Breads, cereals, pastas, and whole grains; Fruits and vegetables; Beans; Dairy products; Candy, desserts, and sweetened beverages.

Carbohydrates give your body the energy it needs, so don't cut out healthy carbohydrates. When you have gestational diabetes, too many carbohydrates may cause your blood glucose to rise out of your target range. So, it's important to know how many carbohydrates are in what you eat and drink.

Talk to your diabetes care team about how many carbohydrates to aim for in each meal and snack.

Choose healthy carbohydrates like whole grains, vegetables, and fruit. They are high in fiber and nutrients. And they tend to fill you up, while not raising your blood sugar too fast. That's a plus when trying to manage your diabetes.

At the same time, limit carbohydrates that are high in refined sugar like desserts, soda, and sweetened tea.

You also need to control your portion sizes. If you often choose foods high in sugar, or eat large portions, you may find you're not satisfying your appetite, nutritional needs, or weight goals.

Learn what portion sizes are best for you to help control your blood sugar. Use measuring cups to accurately measure your portion sizes.

Including protein, like skinless chicken breast, peanut butter, or cheese, in your meals and snacks can help you feel full and give your baby all the nutrients needed to grow.

Work with a registered dietitian to develop a meal plan that's right for you. It'll give you the confidence you need to keep your blood glucose in a healthy range to help your baby grow and thrive.