

## Healthy Living After Gestational Diabetes

Now that you have delivered your baby, we encourage you to continue making healthy eating and lifestyle choices. Doing so reduces your chances of having higher blood sugars or getting diabetes in the future.

Here are some ways for you to remain healthy.

### Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. You don't need to prepare anything. It is always at the right temperature for your baby. Breast milk is 'sterile' so there is less chance of your baby being exposed to germs.

Breastfeeding also helps with weight loss. It also helps reduce the chances of diabetes in the future for you and your baby.

Breastfed babies should get 400 IU of Vitamin D drops from the time they are born until they are 12 months old. This is because there isn't quite enough Vitamin D in breast milk.

It is a good idea for you to take a multi-vitamin throughout breastfeeding. You can continue to take a prenatal vitamin during this time.

If you have questions about breastfeeding or need help with breastfeeding, contact your local public health unit.

### Healthy eating

Eating healthy foods helps your body get the nutrients needed to make breast milk. Healthy foods also help you stay healthy as you care for your new baby and are good for the whole family.

Tips for healthy eating:

- Eat 3 meals a day. Space your meals 4 to 6 hours apart. Healthy snacks can be added as needed.
- For at least 2 meals, fill ½ of your plate with vegetables.
- Choose 3 to 4 food groups at each meal.
- Choose fresh foods instead of processed foods. Include foods high in calcium.
- Choose foods high in fibre.
- Eat some type of protein at each meal.
- Eat 2 to 3 fresh fruits every day.
- Drink more fluids while breastfeeding. Water is a great choice. Choose calorie-free drinks. Limit yourself to no more than 500mL (2 cups) a day of drinks with caffeine.
- Check food labels for calories, fat, sugar, and sodium amounts. Limit foods and drinks high in these things.

### Keeping active

Keeping active is a great way to improve your energy and manage your weight. Activity also helps reduce stress. Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

Make activity part of your family routine. This helps promote lifelong healthy habits, not just for you but for your child as well.

### Healthy body weight

Many women ask us “How much should I weigh?” We believe you should aim for a weight that is healthy for you. If you need to lose weight, you should do it gradually.

A good way to tell if you are underweight, overweight, or a healthy weight, is to measure your Body Mass Index (B.M.I.). This compares your height with your weight.

Find out your B.M.I. by using the calculator from Diabetes Canada.

[www.diabetes.ca/bmi](http://www.diabetes.ca/bmi)

A healthy range for a B.M.I. is from 18.5 to 24.9.

**My healthy weight range:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Checking blood sugar

After having your baby, we recommend you have a glucose tolerance test done 6 to 8 weeks after delivery. This is to check for diabetes when you are not pregnant.

Two to 7 women out of 10 who have had gestational diabetes are more likely to get prediabetes or diabetes in the future. (Prediabetes refers to higher than normal blood sugars but not yet high enough to be confirmed as diabetes.) It is important to identify prediabetes or diabetes early to prevent complications.

We also recommend you have a fasting blood sugar test done once a year.

Talk to your family practitioner about arranging for these tests.

### Planning to have another baby?

Before planning another pregnancy, we recommend you have your fasting blood sugar checked. This is so you can start the pregnancy in the best possible health.

We also recommend you take Folic Acid before becoming pregnant. This reduces the chances of birth defects for your baby.

Healthy eating, daily activity, and a healthy weight are important for you too.

These recommendations will help you start the pregnancy in the best possible health.

### My questions and notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Family practitioner: Refers to family doctor or nurse practitioner