

Patient information

Hospital menu guidance for pregnant women with diabetes

West Suffolk Hospital menus aim to provide patients with a choice of foods. The Hospital caters for a wide range of dietary needs. If you have any questions, please ask nursing staff to speak to the catering department or a dietitian.

Diabetes and diet

When you have diabetes, the amount and types of food that you eat will affect your blood glucose levels. Your blood glucose levels will have an effect on your overall health as well as the health of your baby.

Getting the balance right

Carbohydrate is an essential nutrient giving energy to you and your growing baby. See the next page for more information on carbohydrate.

If you eat more carbohydrate than the insulin your body makes (or that you inject) can cope with, then your blood glucose levels will go high. If you do not eat enough carbohydrate your blood glucose levels may go low. For this reason:

- It is essential to have some carbohydrate at each hospital meal (3 meals per day).
 - Missing carbohydrate at a meal time can cause problems for your diabetes medication
 - Some people may be asked to restrict the carbohydrate at a meal – you will be told by your doctor or nurse if you need to do this.
- If there is a risk of hypoglycaemia (blood glucose levels below 4 mmol/l) you may be advised to have carbohydrate snacks between your meals.
 - If there is no risk of hypoglycaemia, you may not need extra snacks.

- It is important to know what your blood glucose levels are. You will be advised by the medical obstetric team how often to check your blood glucose levels.
 - If your blood glucose levels are generally too high, you may need to eat less carbohydrate or take more diabetes medication.
 - If your blood glucose levels are generally too low, you may need to eat more carbohydrate or take less diabetes medication.
 - If your blood glucose levels are sometimes high and sometimes low, you need to keep your carbohydrate portion size similar from meal to meal.

Remember: Your blood glucose level will go up or down depending on the total amount of carbohydrate (carbs) you eat so eating lots of lower-carb foods will have the same effect as eating a small amount of high-carb food.

Sickness / nausea

You should be given advice on what to do if you don't feel well enough to eat a meal. Missing meals can be very dangerous; please ask if you do not have this advice.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrate foods include starches and sugars. Carbohydrate foods you will find on the hospital menus are:

Breakfast	Savoury	Sweet		Drinks
Bread Cereal Fruit (all types) Fruit juice Milk Porridge Yoghurt	Bread Crackers Pasta Pastry (pies, quiche) Potato Rice	Biscuits Cakes Crumble Custard Jelly Fruit Gateau Ice cream	Mousse Pies Rice Pudding Semolina Sponge Whip Yoghurt	Fruit juice Milk

Important note on sugar

Sugar and starch are both types of carbohydrate and both will affect your blood glucose levels – the more of them you eat, the higher your blood glucose levels will go.

Sugar can taste nice but nutritionally, it only gives the body energy and has no other benefits. Starchy foods, on the other hand, can provide other nutrients, such as vitamins or fibre.

To control your blood glucose levels, you will need to be consistent with the amounts of carbohydrate you eat. It is usually better to get your carbohydrate from starchy foods, but to enjoy a varied diet you can include some sugar as long as your total carbohydrate intake (starch + sugar = total carbohydrate intake) stays the same as usual.

Whether or not a food contains carbohydrate has no link to whether the food is healthy in other ways. A healthy balanced diet is recommended during pregnancy. For more information, ask your midwife or a dietitian.

Help!

Some people have other dietary needs too. If you are finding it difficult to combine all the different dietary advice, please ask the nursing staff to refer you to the Dietitians.

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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