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Wyoming Healthy Together Program
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What Is Gestational Diabetes?

Gestational diabetes is a special kind of diabetes that happens only during pregnancy. Normally, as food is digested, it turns into sugar (**glucose**) that goes into your bloodstream. Your body makes a substance called **insulin** that helps your cells use this blood sugar. Changes that occur in your body while you're pregnant cause your blood sugar to be too high. This can be risky for both you and your baby. You can take steps to control your blood sugar and reduce these risks.

Managing Gestational Diabetes

Managing gestational diabetes means controlling your blood sugar while you are pregnant. Your healthcare team will help you put together a plan to do this. This plan will include:

- **Eating Right.** To do this, you need to eat regular meals and snacks. You need to limit foods that are high in sugar. And you need to gain the right amount of weight. Your healthcare team will help you make a meal plan that works for you.
- **Getting Exercise.** Your body uses more blood sugar when you exercise. Your healthcare team can decide on the best kind of exercise for you, and the best times for you to exercise.
- **Checking Your Blood Sugar.** You will most likely check your blood sugar at home 2 or more times a day. Your healthcare team will teach you how to check. They will also discuss your blood sugar goals with you. Your blood sugar may also be tested every week or so in the lab.



Eating the right foods will help you keep your blood sugar at safe levels for you and your baby.

Risks to Your Baby

If you don't control your blood sugar, your baby is more likely to have these problems:

- Your baby may grow too large. If your blood sugar stays too high, your baby may grow too large (macrosomia) to come through your vagina without injuring the baby's arms and shoulders.
- Your baby's organs may not be fully developed before birth. If your blood sugar stays too high, your baby might grow so large that he or she has to be born early. Then the baby's lungs may not work well. This is called respiratory distress syndrome (RDS). Your baby's liver also may not work well. Then your baby may be yellow (jaundiced) after birth.
- Your baby's blood sugar may be low after birth. If your blood sugar is too high, your baby makes extra insulin. The baby still makes extra insulin right after birth. Then he or she may have to be treated for low blood sugar.
- Your baby could be stillborn. This is very rare, but your baby could die before birth if your blood sugar stays high for too long.

Risks to You

If you don't control your blood sugar, you are more likely to have these problems: