

You are advised to consult a dietitian for a more comprehensive nutritional assessment and individualised dietary advice on how to prepare for pregnancy. You may also seek support from your dietitian when you are pregnant.

## Where Can You Get More Information?

To find a dietitian, please call 6357 8322 to book an appointment. For a dietitian consultation session, you will need to obtain a referral from your doctor.

**Clinic B2**

**Department of Nutrition and Dietetics**

TTSH Medical Centre, Level B2

**Contact:**

6357 7000 (Central Hotline)



Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to access the information online or visit <http://bit.ly/TTSHHealth-Library>

Was this information helpful?  
Please feel free to email us if you have any feedback regarding what you have just read at [patienteducation@ttsh.com.sg](mailto:patienteducation@ttsh.com.sg)



© Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore 2021. All rights reserved. All information correct as of February 2021. No part of this document may be reproduced, copied, reverse compiled, adapted, distributed, commercially exploited, displayed or stored in a database, retrieval system or transmitted in any form without prior permission of Tan Tock Seng Hospital. All information and material found in this document are for purposes of information only and are not meant to substitute any advice provided by your own physician or other medical professionals.

PECC-DIS-ED-2021-1090-v1



Department of  
**NUTRITION & DIETETICS**

## Planning for Pregnancy When You Have Diabetes



## The Importance of Regulating Your Blood Glucose Levels Before Pregnancy

Poorly controlled diabetes during pregnancy increases the risk of complications for the mother and the baby. As these complications can occur in the early stages of pregnancy, it is important to seek advice from your healthcare professionals before stopping contraception (birth control methods) and becoming pregnant.

How complications of uncontrolled diabetes may affect you:

- High blood pressure
- Pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure; protein in the urine that usually occurs only after the 20th week of pregnancy)

How complications of uncontrolled diabetes may affect your baby:

- Early (pre-term) birth
- Birth defects
- Excessive birth weight that requires C-section
- Increased risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes later on in life

## How to Reduce Your Risk of Complications

1. **Maintain an ideal body weight (BMI 18.5-22.9kg/m<sup>2</sup>).** Aim to lose weight if your BMI is above 23kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

$$\text{Body Mass Index (BMI)} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}}$$

2. **Practise good dietary habits** to improve blood glucose control and aim for the HbA1c (gives an indication of your average blood glucose levels over the past three months) target as set by your doctor.

3. **Start taking 400mcg of folic acid daily** before stopping contraception till the end of week 12 of your pregnancy. This reduces the risk of some birth defects in the baby's brain and spine (neural tube defects).

4. **Engage in regular physical activity.** Aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity every week.

5. **Do not stop your contraception** until you have seen your healthcare professionals. Your doctor will advise you on the necessary tests required and review your medications. Some of these medications may not be suitable for consumption during pregnancy.

6. **Stop smoking and avoid passive smoking** (breathing in other people's smoke).

## Tips for a Healthy Pre-Pregnancy Diet

1. **Limit your intake of refined sugars.** Your blood glucose level rises quickly because these sugars are absorbed quickly.
  - ✓ Limit your consumption of sweetened beverages, fruit juices, cakes, kuehs, desserts, ice cream, chocolates and sweets.
  - ✓ Choose diet/sugar-free or no-added sugar beverages.
2. **Ensure three regular meals everyday and choose healthy snacks between your meals.**
  - ✓ Examples of a healthy snack include one serving of fruit, a small tub of low-fat yoghurt, a glass of low-fat milk, and a slice of wholemeal bread.
3. **Increase your fibre intake.** Fibre helps slow down the absorption of glucose into the blood and keeps you full.
  - ✓ Choose wholegrains (e.g. choose wholemeal bread and biscuits over white bread and plain crackers, brown/red/purple rice over white rice, and oats over refined cereals).
  - ✓ Aim for two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables daily.
  - ✓ Incorporate plant-based proteins into your diet (e.g. beans and lentils).
4. **Reduce your fat intake.**
  - ✓ Limit your intake of processed foods (e.g. sausage, bacon and ham). Choose lean meat or plant-based proteins (e.g. tofu, beans and lentils).
  - ✓ Remove visible fat and skin from meat.
  - ✓ Limit your intake of high saturated and trans fat snacks (e.g. chips, cakes, cookies and chocolates).
  - ✓ Limit your intake of fast foods and fried foods.
  - ✓ Choose low-fat cooking methods (e.g. steaming, stir-frying and grilling).
5. **Try to get at least 1000mg of calcium daily.** Calcium is a mineral that helps form and maintain healthy teeth and bones for you and your baby.
  - ✓ Dairy foods are one of the best sources of calcium.
6. **Include foods that are high in folic acid.**
  - ✓ These include green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach), broccoli, ladies finger, fruits (e.g. orange, papaya, strawberries), nuts and beans.

