



Top Ten Tips to Reduce Your Risk of Type 2 Diabetes Key Steps for Women After Gestational Diabetes

Take control of your future health with these evidence-based strategies to reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

✓ 1. Maintain Regular Blood Glucose Monitoring

Schedule the recommended follow-up tests (usually at 6-12 weeks postpartum, then annually). Early detection allows for timely intervention and better outcomes.

✓ 2. Focus on Gradual, Sustainable Weight Management

If needed, aim for a 5-10% weight loss through realistic goals. Even modest weight reduction significantly lowers diabetes risk. Set small, achievable targets rather than dramatic changes. *Remember: You are quite likely sleep-deprived, which increases cortisol and makes weight management harder. Be patient with yourself and focus on progress, not perfection.*

✓ 3. Prioritise Balanced, Consistent Meals

- Choose complex carbohydrates over refined sugars
- Include protein and healthy fats at each meal
- Eat regular meals to maintain stable blood sugar levels
- Focus on whole foods: vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and legumes

✓ 4. Incorporate Regular Physical Activity

Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise weekly. **We know childcare and guilt about leaving your baby can be major barriers.**

Consider:

- Brisk walking with your baby in a pram (baby gets fresh air, you get movement)
- Baby-wearing walks or dancing
- Swimming or water aerobics (if you have childcare support)
- Postnatal yoga or Pilates classes that welcome babies
- Strength training 2-3 times per week (even 10-minute sessions at home count!)

- Online workouts during nap time
- *Movement doesn't have to mean leaving your baby or joining a gym. Start where you are if gym isn't for you.*

✓ 5. Consider Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM)

Work with a healthcare professional trained in diabetes prevention to explore CGM options. This technology can help you:

- Understand how different foods affect your blood sugar
- Identify patterns in glucose responses
- Make informed dietary and lifestyle choices
- Catch early warning signs before they become problematic

✓ 6. Prioritise Quality Sleep (As Much As Possible)

Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep when possible. **We know this feels impossible with a new baby, and that's one of the most difficult ironies:** sleep deprivation directly worsens insulin resistance and increases diabetes risk, yet motherhood often means broken sleep for months or years.

Realistic strategies:

- Accept help with night feeds when offered
- Nap when baby naps (even 20 minutes helps)
- Ask your partner to take one night shift so you can get one longer stretch
- Consider safe co-sleeping if it improves everyone's sleep (discuss with your GP)

This isn't about perfection - it's about recognizing that sleep matters for your metabolic health and doing what you can within the reality of new motherhood."

✓ 7. Manage Stress Effectively

Chronic stress can impact blood sugar control. Chronic stress can impact blood sugar control. **And let's be honest: new motherhood is stressful.** Try:

- Mindfulness or meditation practices (even 5 minutes counts)
- Connecting with other mothers who understand your experience
- **Asking for help when needed - this is not selfish, it's essential**
- Regular self-care activities (yes, even small things like a shower alone)

Your health matters. Taking care of yourself isn't taking away from your baby - it's modelling healthy behaviour and ensuring you're here for them long-term.

✓ 8. Build Your Support Network - You Can't Do This Alone

Having GDM taught you to monitor closely and seek help. But postpartum, that support

often disappears right when you need it most.

You need support because:

- Sleep deprivation and metabolic health work against each other
- Managing your health while caring for a baby is genuinely difficult
- Someone needs to give you permission to prioritize yourself
- **How to build support:**
- **Talk to your partner/family** about what you need: Help with night feeds? Time to exercise? Support with meal prep?
- Connect with other women who've experienced GDM through support groups or online communities
- Work with healthcare professionals who specialize in diabetes prevention (like a dietitian or diabetes educator trained in postpartum care)
- Join our community of women supporting each other through this journey

Remember: Asking for help isn't weakness. It's recognizing that your health matters for you *and* for your family's future."

✓ 9. Plan for Future Pregnancies

If considering more children, work with your healthcare team to optimise your health beforehand. Preconception care can reduce the risk of GDM recurring.

✓ 10. Stay Informed and Proactive

Keep up with regular check-ups, stay educated about diabetes prevention, and advocate for your health. Knowledge is power in prevention.

This checklist is for educational purposes only and does not replace professional medical advice.

"Why This Feels So Hard Right Now (And Why That's Completely Normal)"

If you're feeling overwhelmed about preventing type 2 diabetes while caring for a new baby, you're not alone. Many women with GDM experience:

- **Sleep deprivation** that makes insulin resistance worse - creating a frustrating cycle when you're already at higher risk
- **The mental load** of putting everyone else's needs first - your baby, your family - while your own health takes a back seat

- **A sense of abandonment** after the close monitoring during pregnancy suddenly stops postpartum
- **Guilt** about taking time for exercise or meal prep when it means time away from your children
- **Limited childcare** that makes it hard to prioritise movement or appointments

These barriers are *real*, and they matter. The tips below acknowledge these challenges and offer realistic strategies that fit into your life as a mum.

Many women feel forgotten after GDM. During pregnancy, you had regular monitoring, clear guidelines, and a care team watching closely. Postpartum, that can suddenly stop - and it can feel isolating.

You're not imagining it. There is a gap in postpartum care for women with GDM, and you deserve ongoing support. That's why staying proactive about your follow-up care and connecting with professionals who specialize in diabetes prevention is so important.



Your health matters beyond pregnancy. You matter beyond being a mother.

Remember: These recommendations work best when personalised to your individual situation. Always consult with healthcare professionals trained in this specialty area.

Ready to take the next step? Join our community of women supporting each other in preventing type 2 diabetes after gestational diabetes. Healthy Futures After GDM on Facebook & Instagram.

You can also email healthyfuturesaftergdmaust@gmail.com