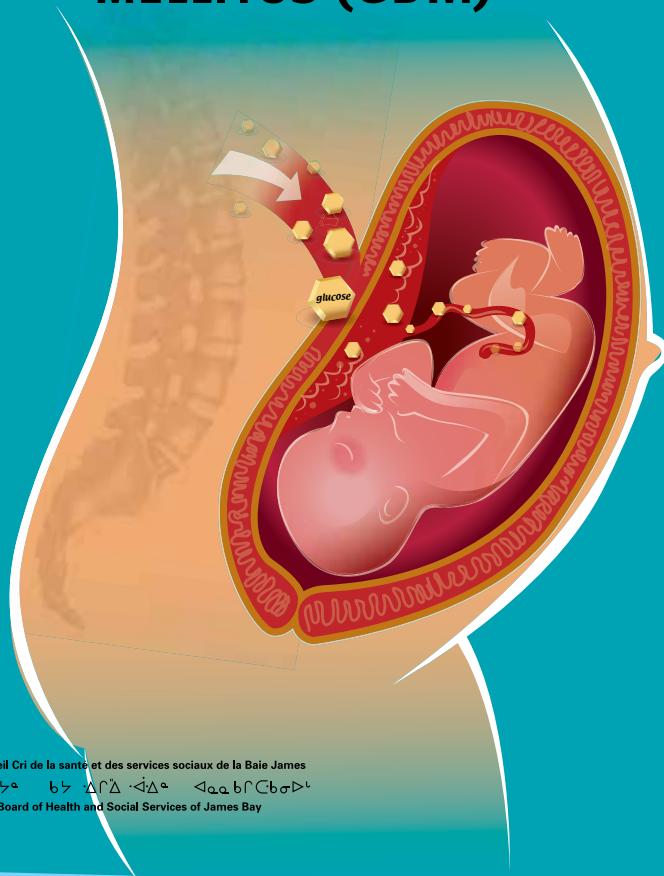


# WHAT IS GDM?

## A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING GESTATIONAL DIABETES MELLITUS (GDM)

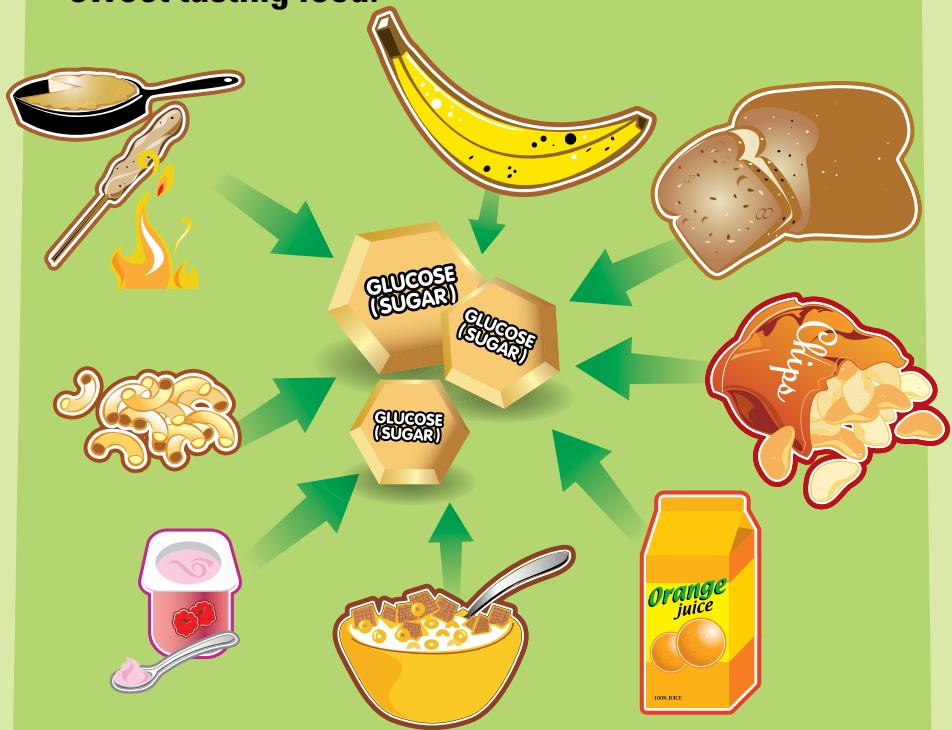


Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James  
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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

# WHERE SUGAR COMES FROM

In this booklet, glucose means the kind of sugar found inside our body (blood sugar).

Sugar comes from most of the food we eat. **Not just sweet tasting food.**



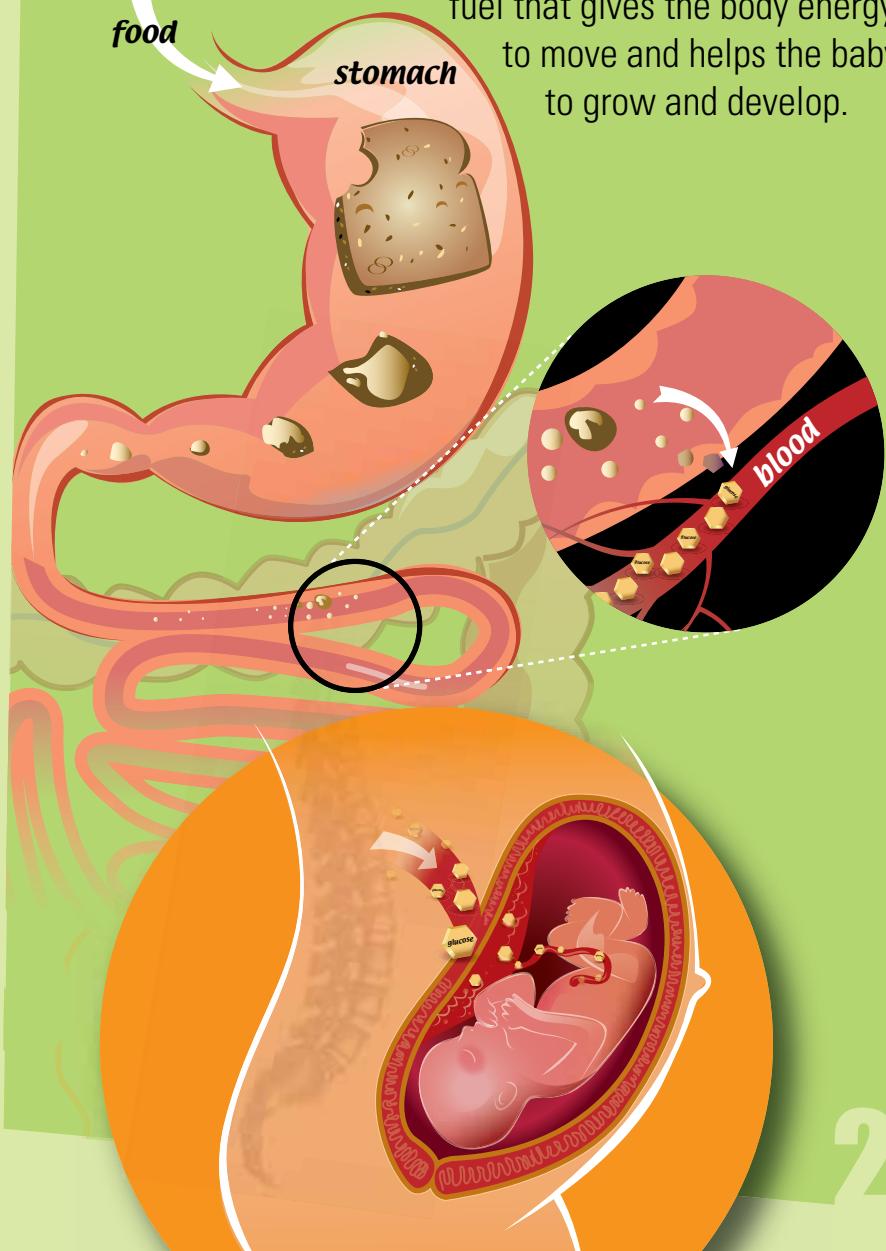
## Food that contains sugar includes:

- Anything made of flour (bannock, bread, pasta, etc.)
- Rice, potatoes, corn and cereals
- Fruits and fruit juices
- Milk and yogurt
- Desserts, sweets and sweet drinks

**Meat, fish, eggs and cheese do not contain sugar.**

# HOW THE BODY WORKS DURING PREGNANCY

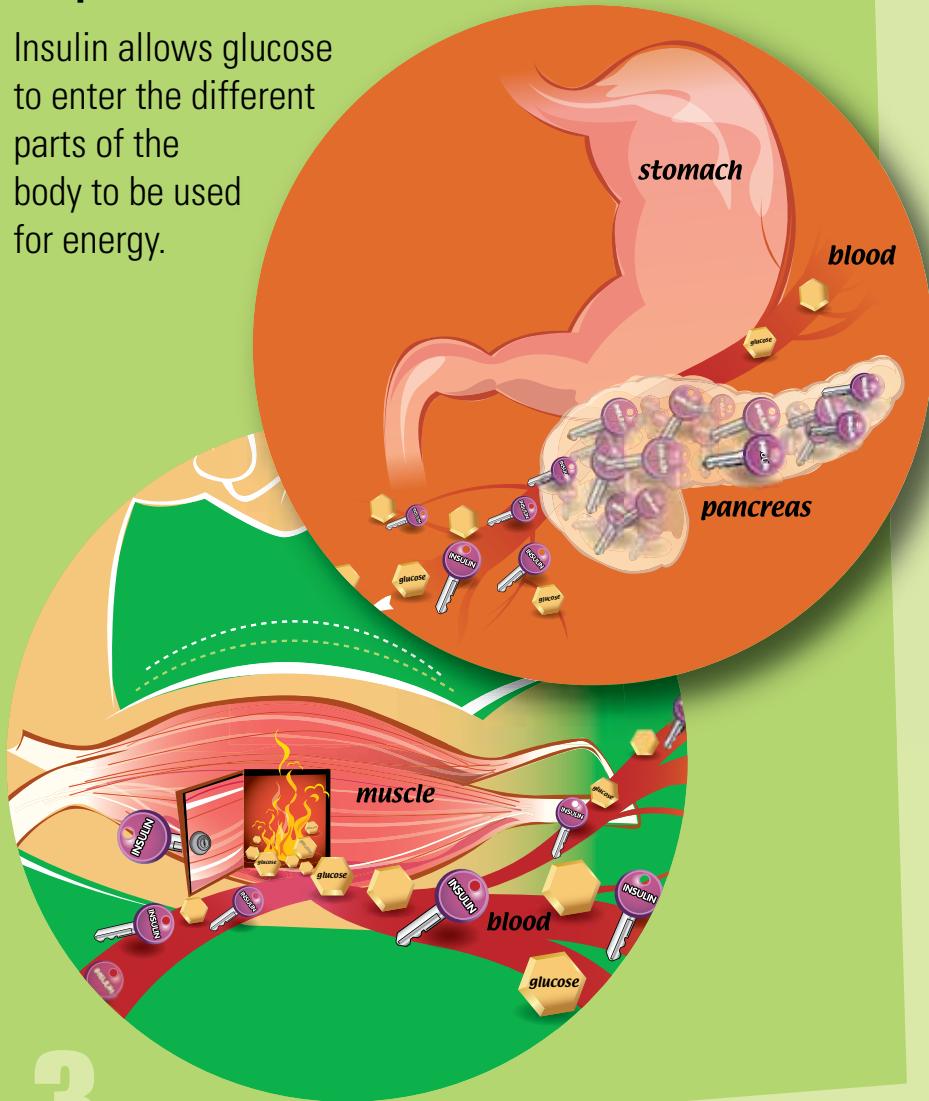
During pregnancy, the sugar from the food goes into the mother and baby's blood. Glucose (blood sugar) is the fuel that gives the body energy to move and helps the baby to grow and develop.



# HOW THE BODY WORKS DURING PREGNANCY

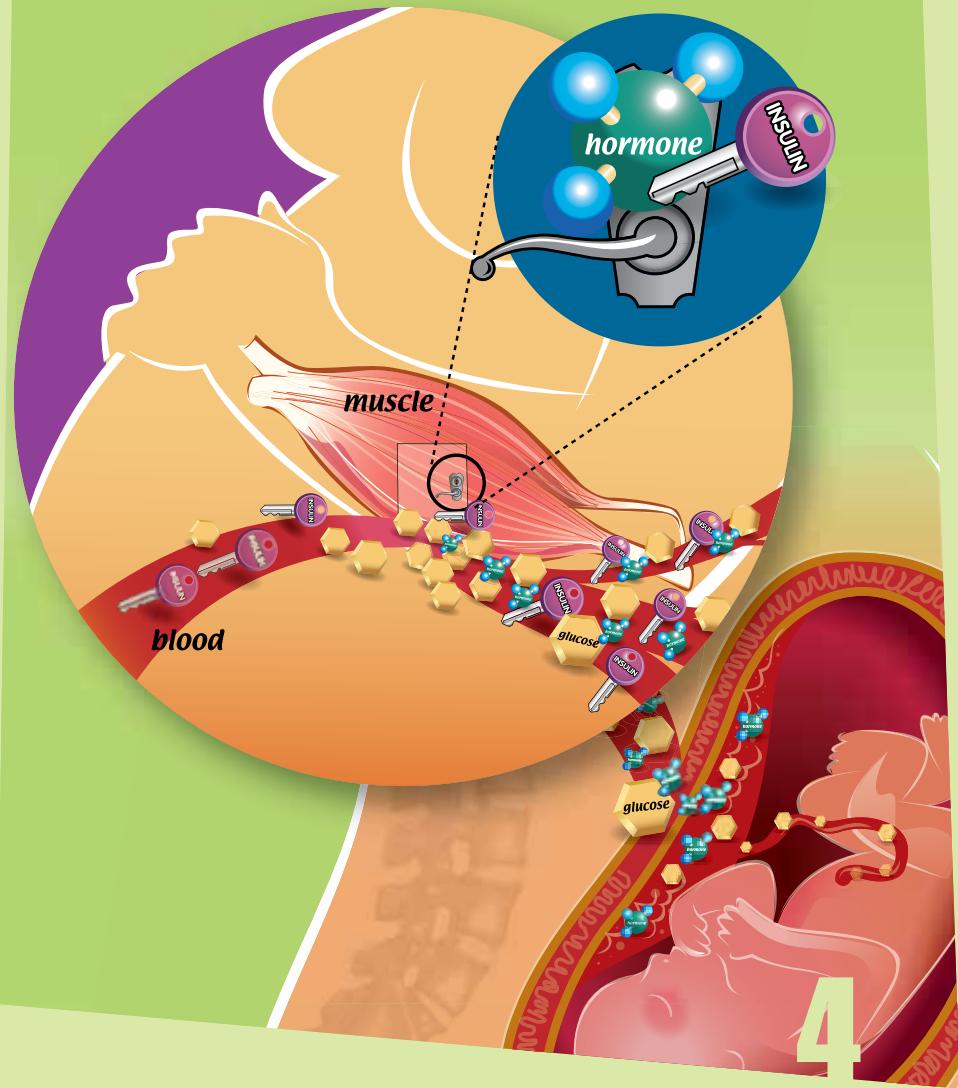
To get glucose from the blood into the different parts of the body, we need a **key**. The key is called **insulin**. The **pancreas** makes insulin.

Insulin allows glucose to enter the different parts of the body to be used for energy.



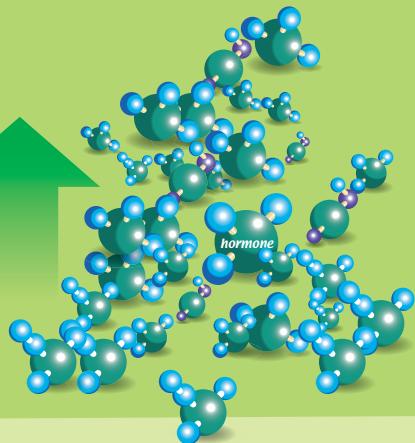
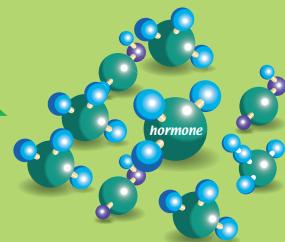
# HOW THE BODY WORKS DURING PREGNANCY

During **all** pregnancies, the placenta makes a **hormone** called human placental lactogen which allows the baby to grow and develop. This hormone supplies energy for the baby but also blocks the normal action of the mother's insulin. This is called **insulin resistance**.



# HOW THE BODY WORKS DURING PREGNANCY

As the placenta grows, more of this hormone is produced which causes more insulin resistance.



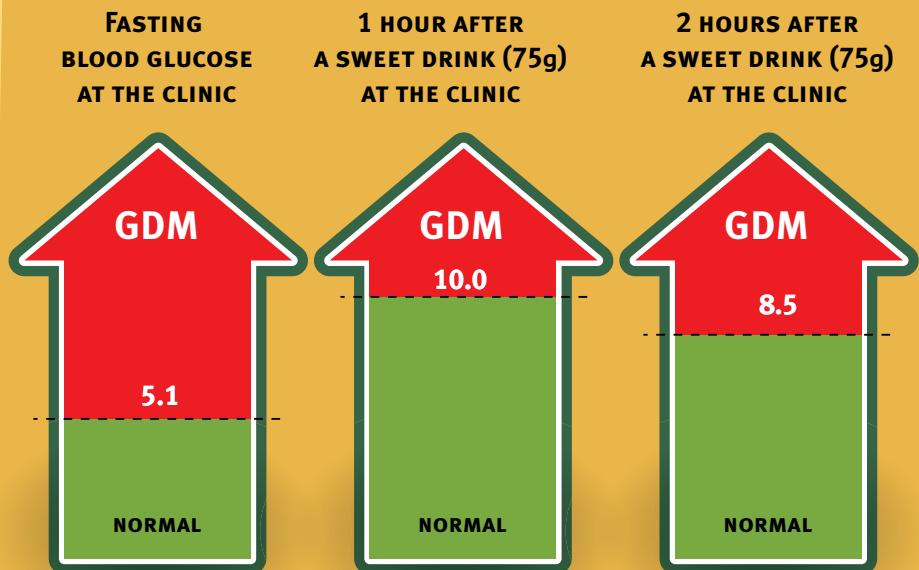
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# WHAT IS GDM

GDM develops when the mother's pancreas can't make enough insulin to deal with its extra demand. Her blood glucose will rise above normal levels because of **insulin resistance**.

To make sure the mother produces enough insulin, her blood glucose will be tested around the 22nd week of pregnancy. This test is called 75g (sweet drink).

Women who had diabetes **before** pregnancy don't need this test.



# HEALTHY BLOOD GLUCOSE DURING PREGNANCY

Keeping blood glucose normal during pregnancy will reduce the risk of **complications** for the mother and the baby.

These complications could include:

- For the mother: infections, high blood pressure, early labour, difficult delivery and/or a c-section.
- For the baby: low blood glucose at birth, breathing problems, infections or other health problems.
- Baby growing too much; large babies can get injured at birth.



## DID YOU KNOW

Mothers with healthy blood glucose will have babies with healthy birth weights which could prevent diabetes later in the child's life.

# HOW TO KEEP BLOOD GLUCOSE HEALTHY

- **Be active** every day
- Choose **healthy food**
- Eat **3 small nutritious** meals
- Add **nutritious** snacks if needed, including one at bedtime
- Take **insulin** as prescribed
- Aim for **healthy** weight gain



# INSULIN

Eating nutritious food and being physically active may not be enough to keep the mother's blood glucose at a normal level. Insulin may be needed at bedtime and/or mealtimes.

Insulin is safe for the baby, but **high blood glucose is not.**



## FOR A HEALTHY BABY

- Take 5mg of folic acid at least 3 months before pregnancy and until the 14th week of pregnancy.
- Take 1 maternal multivitamin every day during the pregnancy.
- Stay away from alcohol and drugs.
- Choose smoke-free environments.

# AFTER DELIVERY

For most women with GDM, blood glucose levels return to normal after the baby is born.

It is important for the mother to get a blood test when the baby is **6 weeks old**, and again every year.



## DID YOU KNOW

- Keeping a healthy lifestyle after birth will help you lose weight and prevent diabetes.
- Breastfeeding helps prevent obesity and diabetes for your baby.

# TO HELP YOUR WHOLE FAMILY **PREVENT DIABETES**



# CHOOSE A HEALTHY PATH!

### **Prepared by:**

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# Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay



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