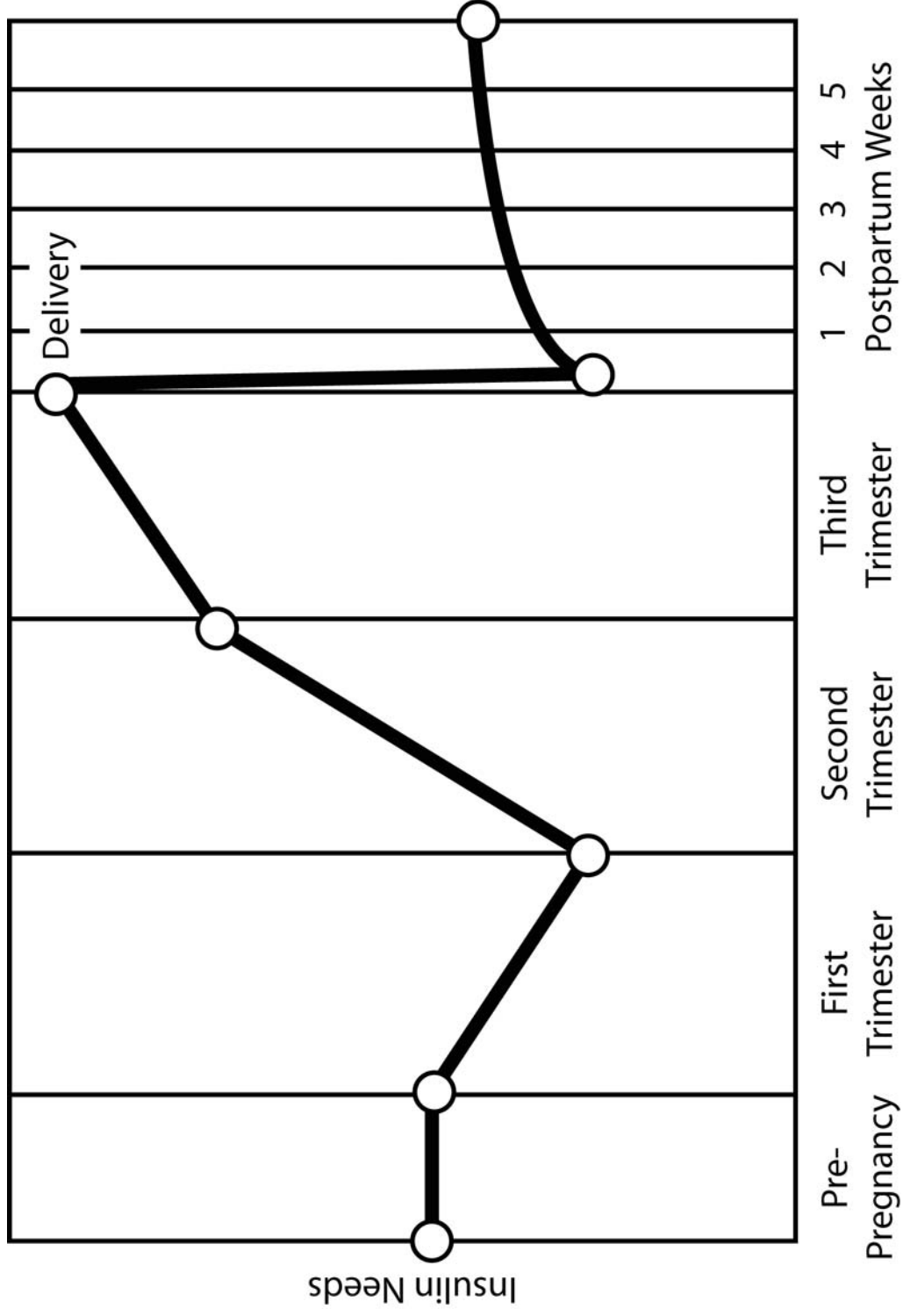




Insulin Needs During Pregnancy





Gestational Diabetes — How to Have a Healthy Baby



(See separately packaged visuals.)





Pregnancy Medicine Sheet



Name of Insulin:

Amount:

Time(s) of Day:

Name of Diabetes Pill:

Amount:

Time(s) of Day:

Names of Other Medicine:
(Include prescribed, over-the-counter and herbal)

Amount:

Time(s) of Day:

Special Instructions:





Victoria Dawahoya (Pima) had diabetes when she was pregnant with Erica. She took care of herself and had a healthy baby.

So Many Blessings

by Victoria Dawahoya (Pima)

I stand in my kitchen, surrounded by my three children. I am making baked fry bread. The children help me stir the pot of low-fat beans. My eldest son sets out bowls of shredded chicken, lettuce and tomato. I stop and think for a moment. I have three children! Three happy, healthy children! For many women, having children is a blessing, and a blessing you can count on. But when you have gestational diabetes, you may be worried and scared. Gestational diabetes means having diabetes when you are pregnant.

I had gestational diabetes when I was pregnant with my second child. After the birth, I was told I had diabetes. Then I became pregnant with my third child. These two pregnancies were filled with emotional ups and downs. I was thrilled to be pregnant, yet scared of insulin shots. I was looking forward to my babies' births, yet didn't know what the future had in store.

Those were scary times. I wanted to have joyful pregnancies. Instead I found myself worried about everything. Now my children are older. They are 10, 6 and 2. They are so healthy! I did it! I had healthy pregnancies. I want to help other women who have diabetes and plan to get pregnant. I want to share my story so others can have healthy babies. Maybe my story will take away a little worry, and replace it with joy.

An early warning

Like many people from my tribe, the Pima, I was at high risk for diabetes. My father, mother, aunts, and uncles have diabetes. I thought that I might get diabetes, but didn't worry too much. My first child, Ruben, was born ten years ago. I didn't have gestational diabetes with my first pregnancy.

Four years later, I became pregnant again. During my third trimester, I was told that I had gestational diabetes. I had two feelings—shock and denial. I was surprised, but I thought it wasn't very serious. I didn't know much about gestational diabetes. I only knew that I could give birth to a big baby.

I learned how to keep my blood sugar under control. I changed my diet. I cut back on portion sizes. I cut out sugary pop. I walked three to four times a week. I checked my blood sugar four to six times a day.

Fears about insulin

Next came another shock. I was told I had to take insulin. Right away I thought about my grandmother. She took insulin. She was blind, got ulcers on her legs, and was on dialysis. I thought that if I took insulin, I would have the same problems. I thought insulin led to blindness or dialysis! I thought insulin was a bad thing, and would cause the end of my life!

My health care provider helped calm my fears. I learned that insulin is a good thing. It would bring my blood sugars down to normal levels quickly. It

would stay in my body only for a while. Insulin would be healthier for my baby, and I didn't have to fear that a part of my body wasn't working.

I was scared to give myself the shots. I was afraid I would hit a vein. I thought I might give myself too much or too little insulin. But, I learned to give myself the shots. Some people say that they don't hurt, but for me, they hurt! I kept telling myself, "I am doing this for my baby."

And it worked! I gave birth to a seven-pound, eight-ounce baby boy! I was so happy!

Old habits return

Right after my baby was born, I quit being active and eating right. I knew that having gestational diabetes meant I was at greater risk for developing diabetes later in my life. Maybe if

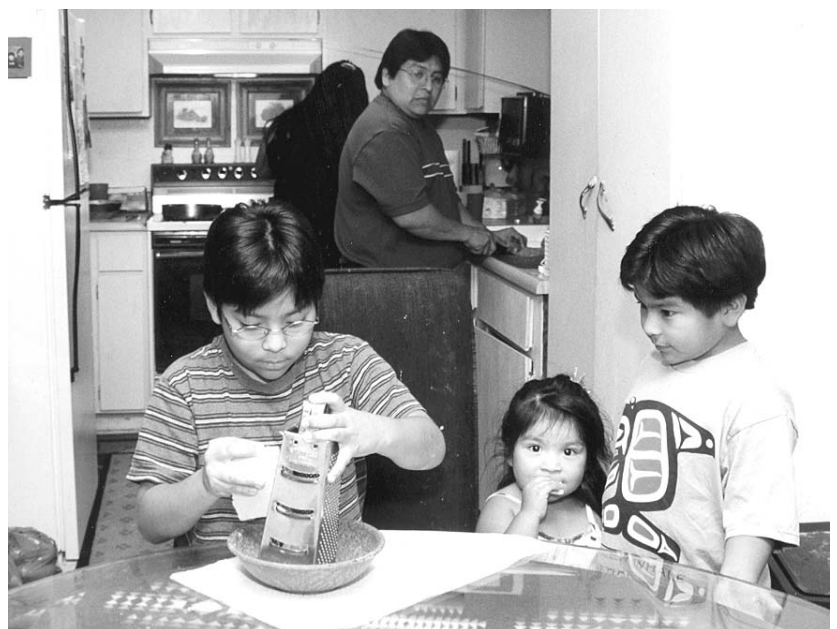
I had kept up my good habits, my story with diabetes would have ended with the birth of my son. But my unborn baby was the only reason I made those good changes. Once he was born, my reason for taking good care of myself disappeared. When I was pregnant and taking good care of myself, I kept saying, "I'm doing this for my baby." I should have said, "I'm doing this for my baby and for myself."

Three years later, I began having irregular menstrual cycles. I also kept getting urinary tract infections and yeast infections that I couldn't get rid of. At age 33, with two children, I found out I had type 2 diabetes.

Back on track

I was so mad at myself! I knew I should have kept up the good habits! So, I started

Victoria Dawahoya learned new eating habits while she was pregnant. She passed them on to her whole family — her husband Ruben and children Ruben, Erica and Nathaniel.



again. I stopped eating fried food. I ate less sweet food. I started eating my big meal at lunch and a smaller meal in the evening. I did aerobics twice a week and weight training three times a week. I was making changes for myself to control my blood sugar.

Two months later, I had a big shock. I was pregnant! I had diabetes and I was scared. I knew I would have to take insulin during my pregnancy. My emotions were mixed up. I was so happy to be pregnant. Yet I knew that being pregnant with diabetes is very serious. That is why it was so important to have my blood sugar in control. I was determined to keep my healthy habits, this time for my baby and for myself.

Helping each other

My husband gave great support. He went with me to my medical appointments. He learned how to give me insulin shots. When I wasn't feeling well, he gave me the shots. His support brought us closer.

With this pregnancy, I was more confident. I carefully watched what I ate. I knew that what I put in my mouth was connected to my baby. I took my blood sugar readings four times every day. I had good blood sugar levels: 60-90 in the morning, before eating, 100-120 after lunch and dinner.

Reflecting on the good

On August 3, 1999, I gave birth to a six-pound, three-ounce, healthy girl! I was thrilled that

I had a healthy pregnancy, even with diabetes. And, I was determined to keep my new habits. I decided to do it for me first, then for my children. I want to give my children memories of a healthy mother. I want to live a long time.

Sometimes it is a struggle to stay on track. It is different when I don't have a baby inside of me. I am changing my life-style little by little. I prepare low-fat and low-sugar food for my family. I try to be active every day. Even though I had two difficult pregnancies, I learned a lot. I developed new habits that I am keeping. My children are learning about good habits. Maybe they will not get diabetes. That thought makes my struggle worth it!





Changes I Can Make



I am:

- Thinking about it
- Ready to start
- Doing it now
- Doing it for 6 months

My long-term goal is:

My short-term goal is: (Be specific about what, when, how and where)

I will ask (Who?) _____ for support by helping me in this way:
(Be specific about what they can do to help you)

I will check regularly to see if I reach my goal by:

When I reach my short-term goal my reward will be:

Signature

Date

