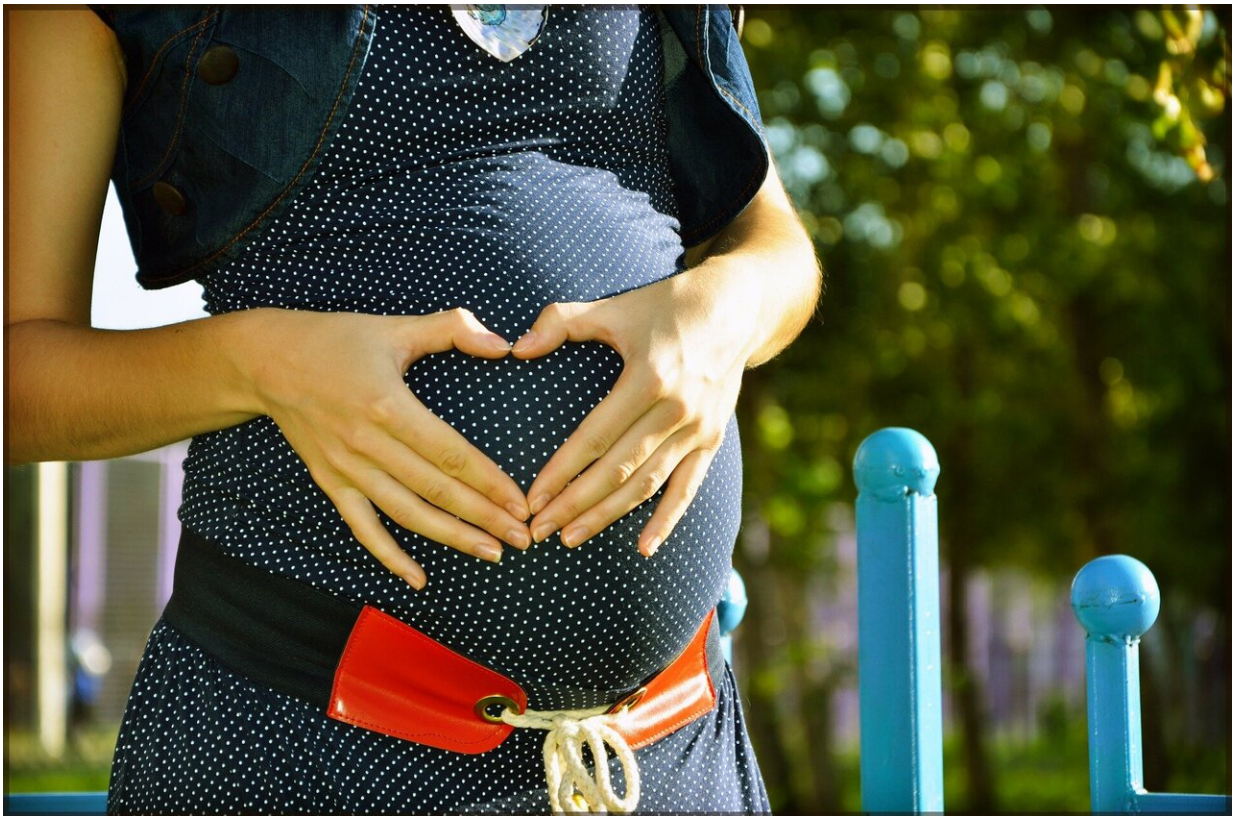


# The 5:2 diet: A good choice for gestational diabetes

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Weight loss after gestational diabetes can prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Yet finding the most effective way to lose weight and keep it off can be a challenge, especially for mothers with a new baby.

Now, new research from the University of South Australia suggests that the popular 5:2 or intermittent fasting [diet](#) is just as effective as a conventional energy-restricting diet, enabling [women](#) greater choice and flexibility when it comes to [weight](#) loss.

The 5:2 diet allows five days of normal eating each week while substantially restricting calories over two days a week, as opposed to a typical diet that requires moderate energy restrictions daily.

Globally, one in five pregnancies are affected by gestational diabetes, with these women having a ten-fold risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life. Women who have had gestational diabetes and are also overweight are at an even higher risk. Type 2 diabetes has lifelong consequences and can lead to other chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer.

Lead researcher, UniSA's Dr. Kristy Gray, says the finding will be greatly welcomed by women looking to lose weight.

"Gestational diabetes is the fastest growing type of diabetes in Australia, affecting 15 percent of pregnancies," Dr. Gray says.

"Healthy eating and regular physical activity are recommended to manage gestational diabetes, with continuous energy restriction diets—or diets that cut calories by 25-30 percent—being the most common strategy for weight loss and diabetes prevention.

"The trouble is, however, that new mums often put themselves last—they're struggling with fatigue and juggling [family responsibilities](#)—so when it comes to weight loss, many find it hard to stick to a low-calorie diet.

"The 5:2 diet may provide a less overwhelming option. As it only cuts

calories over two days, some women may find it easier to adopt and adhere to, as opposed to a consistently low-calorie diet requiring constant management.

"Our research shows that the 5:2 diet is just as effective at achieving weight loss as a continuous energy-restricted diet in women who have had gestational diabetes, which is great, because it provides women with greater choice and control.

"Of course, women should seek advice from a health professional before commencing this type of diet, to make sure that it is suitable for them."

The research investigated the effects of both the 5:2 diet (five days of normal eating and two days of 500 calories) and a continuous energy-restricted diet (1500 calories per day) on [weight loss](#) and [diabetes](#) risk markers in women with a previous diagnosis of [gestational diabetes](#). Both diets restricted energy by approximately 25 percent each week.

**More information:** Kristy L Gray et al, The effect of intermittent energy restriction on weight loss and diabetes risk markers in women with a history of gestational diabetes: a 12-month randomized control trial, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (2021). [DOI: 10.1093/ajcn/nqab058](#)

Provided by University of South Australia

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