

On the holidays, stick to your plan

The tasty treats of the holiday season are one of the many things that people look forward to each December. Just because you have diabetes doesn't mean you have to miss out on all the excitement and deliciousness that the holiday has to offer.

A healthy diet and proper meal planning are an important part of diabetes management and blood glucose control. And managing your diabetes care during the holidays means that you must continue on the same path and meal time management that you use during the other days of the year, just with a bit more flexibility.

Meal Planning

It can be easy to get carried away with all the tempting food around you, but maintaining a meal plan is key to balanced blood glucose levels. It's important to remember during the holiday season to not get defeated. High blood glucose levels can happen for no good reason at all, no matter how diligent your care is.

Just like they say you shouldn't go grocery shopping when you are hungry, you shouldn't make a meal plan when you are hungry. Being hungry when planning your holiday meal can create flaws in your judgment and cause you to over-plan. If you want to indulge in alcoholic beverages be sure to include these in your meal plan as well. They are typically higher in calories and can cause your blood glucose levels to rise and fall. Be sure to plan out your beverages as well and stick to the plan.

You may also want to mention to family members ahead of time that you are on a strict plan for the meal so that they won't add to temptation and offer anything not on your plan.

Drink Water Before Your Meal

By drinking a full glass of water before you start to eat, you can reduce the amount of food you consume. Water will make you feel full sooner and help to reduce your appetite.

Don't Forget the Vegetables

Make sure half your plate is filled with a good portion of non-starchy vegetables. Vegetables help you get the healthy carbs your body needs while keeping you fuller longer.

Avoid Grazing Between Meals

Even with the best efforts, holiday meals rarely come out to the table on time. Because of this delay, it can lead to an increase in hunger which can also increase your likelihood to graze between meals. A great addition to any meal plan is to account for possible food delays. By consuming protein pre-meal, you can help to ward off any ravenous hunger while waiting for dinner. Low calorie, low carb snacks such as celery and carrot sticks can help you stay on track.

Slow Down and Enjoy Your Food

Eating with your family can be a good occasion to catch up with them and slow down with your meal. This will reduce the chances of going for a second helping if you should finish before someone else. Eating more slowly will give you time to communicate with family you may have not seen in a while and also allow you to enjoy the flavors of the holiday.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

When the meal is finished, it's best to put the extra food out of the way and cover it up. This can help to keep temptations out of sight and minimize the chances of picking at leftovers and over-indulging.

Test More Frequently

During the holidays, it's important to include additional testing throughout the day to help catch any fluctuations in your blood sugar early enough.

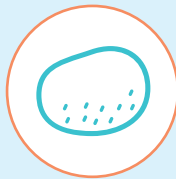
Sensible Mealtime Options

Choosing which foods to indulge in can be challenging with so many options in front of you. The following examples are some great choices that can help to cut the fat and calories from your holiday dinner.



TURKEY

Turkey is often the main course of the holiday meal. White meat is less fatty than dark meat and can help to reduce the total number of calories you consume.



ROASTED POTATOES

Keeping your fat total to a minimum during the holiday season is important in maintaining balanced blood glucose levels. You can keep the fat on your potatoes lower by roasting them instead of making mashed or using an oil spray when cooking.



VEGETABLES

Filling at least half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables can help to keep your calories lower and keep you feeling fuller much longer. This will leave less room for any temptations or even seconds.



DESSERT

It wouldn't be a holiday without tasty desserts. By using skim milk, less sugar, and less oil in your desserts, you can cut down the total amount of fat you consume without sacrificing your dessert.

Bring Your Own Dishes

Everyone loves an extra bit of help in cooking the holiday meal. So if you are going to a friend or family member's house take something you've made that can help cut down your calories and carbohydrates. They will surely love the additional help in creating an amazing meal.

Remain Active

Even though it can be tempting to slow down your activity levels during the holiday season, it's important to remain as active as you were before. You can still make the holidays an active season even if you think you don't have the time to squeeze it in.

- Take a walk after you finish your meal.
- Play a game outdoors if the weather allows.
- Use the extra time off to squeeze in extra activity.

One important thing to remember is that no one is perfect. No matter how hard we try to stay on our plans or manage blood glucose levels, sometimes not everything goes as planned and that is alright. The following day will be another chance. Don't beat yourself up about any mishaps that might happen or if things do not go as planned.

Sources:
<https://www.thediabetescouncil.com/christmas-and-diabetes-are-you-prepared/>

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