

Holiday meal planning tips



The holidays are a busy time filled with the three f's; family, friends and food.

We take all of our time with so much planning for those three important things that we forget to take care of ourselves and we end up paying for it later.

Those with health issues, such as diabetes, need to consider what their nutrition will be during this fun and exciting time of year. Tips or recommendations for those with diabetes are also valuable for anyone's health.

So, here are tips that the American Diabetes Association recommends to help guide you through your next holiday event.

—Plan ahead once you know your schedule. Are you going out of town to spend the holiday with others or are you hosting the event? Does your holiday include some time for physical activity?

—Focus on friends and family instead of food. Try to have events revolve around your loved ones by playing games or spending time outdoors.

—Don't overdo it. Slow down and take time to enjoy the foods you have only once a year. If you are planning on dessert, maybe cut back on other carbohydrates during the meal, such as bread. Make sure that your portions are reasonable and avoid going back for seconds.

—Don't skip meals. Skipping meals makes managing blood glucose more difficult. In addition, if

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you are over hungry then you tend to overeat. So, have light meals and snacks throughout the day.

—Don't worry about what is on the menu. Bring a favorite diabetes-friendly recipe or a low-sugar, low-fat version of a recipe. Enjoy all foods by estimating carbohydrates per serving and adjust serving sizes. You might even want to discuss adjusting medications before your travel or party plans with your health care provider.

—Drink in moderation. To prevent low blood glucose levels later, eat something before having an alcoholic beverage. Remember that beverages can add a lot to the amount of calories, so think about what you are drinking as well. For alcohol, keep it to one drink for women and two drinks for men.

—Stay active. The lack of physical activity is one of the main reasons for weight gain and problems managing diabetes during the holiday season. So, plan your family time around a physical activity and try not to break your exercise routine even if you are away from home. Here are a few suggestions:

—Train for or participate in a local holiday run/walk.

—Start a game of pick-up football or other yard games.

—Bundle up for a walk or play in the snow.

—Help clean up after all the celebrating. Just moving around instead of sitting is going to have some benefit.

—Don't give up. If you over-eat or have more carbs than planned for, don't think you have failed and just go wild abandon afterwards. Get back on track by getting a little exercise, monitor your blood glucose and meds more closely if needed, focus spending time with those around you

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and continue your usual eating habits the next day.

Happy holidays to all of you. Enjoy celebrating the reason for the season with family, friends and food. For more information on meal planning or for recipe suggestions go to www.diabetes.org.

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