

MANAGING DIABETES DURING THE HOLIDAYS

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Managing diabetes takes time and effort on a daily basis. It creates more challenges during traditional holidays like Chinese New Year, Diwali, Eid and Christmas. Here are some tips that can help you through the holidays:

1. Eat consistent meals and snacks.

Many people will try skipping a meal or “saving up carbs” so they can eat more at a holiday gathering. But, skipping meals will cause your blood sugar to dip further and spike higher, which is NOT ideal for blood sugar management. Try to eat every 3-4 hours to maintain optimal blood sugar.



2. Balance meals with starchy foods, proteins, fats and lots of veggies.

It's OK to have starchy foods at your meals. However, if you only eat starchy foods in a larger amount, then there will be sharp increases in blood sugar levels. Try to create a balanced meal by having proteins, fats and lots of non-starchy vegetables with starchy foods. Protein, fat and fiber will help slow down glucose release into the blood as well!

3. Savor each bite.

Sometimes you feel like you are not able to enjoy traditional holiday foods at its fullest because of your condition. However, you can still savor each bite! Chew slowly and use your 5 senses during the eating process. You will find more satisfaction this way, especially if there are many dishes around. You can take a small amount from each dish and still enjoy all of them!

4. Hydrate with water.

Hydration is important during holidays. The best options are water, unsweetened tea, sugar-free or low-sugar beverages. You can have alcohol and sugar-containing beverages in moderation, best pairing them with balanced meals. Follow the advice of your dietitian.

5. Engage with gentle movements.

Physical movements help to decrease blood sugar. Choose anything you enjoy, for example, taking a walk or dancing. Listen to your body and take a break if you feel like it!

6. Continue to check your blood sugar and take medications as directed.

Follow the instructions of your doctor on monitoring blood sugar levels and taking medications. Watch out for signs of low blood sugar or high blood sugar.

7. Give yourself more flexibility during holidays.

Don't beat yourself up if you eat more than you expect and feel like you have failed yourself. Keep in mind that stress will increase blood sugar as well (stressing about food included). You are doing your best to manage your diabetes and focus on the long-term outcomes!