

6 Healthy Eating Tips for the Holidays

Your recipe for staying on track no matter what's cooking

'Tis the season for family, festivity, and food—lots of food. Temptations are everywhere, and parties and [travel](#) disrupt daily routines. What's more, it all goes on for *weeks*.

How do you stick to your diabetes meal plan when everyone around you seems to be splurging? Here are 5 tips that can help:

Holiday Hacks

- Stay “body aware”. Take note when you feel empty or hungry.
- Savor your foods. Eat slowly. Clear your mouth between bites. Recognize when you are starting to get full. Stop well before your stomach hurts.
- Break physical activity up into smaller chunks so it fits into your schedule, like walking 10 minutes several times a day.
- Schedule some “me” time every day—a nap, dog walk, or hot bath to get your energy back for the next celebration.

1. Holiday-Proof Your Plan

You may not be able to control what food you're served, and you're bound to see other people eating a lot of tempting treats. Meet the challenges armed with a plan:

- Eat close to your usual times to keep your blood sugar steady. If your meal is served later than normal, eat a small snack at your usual mealtime and eat a little less when dinner is served.
- Invited to a party? Offer to bring a healthy dish along.
- If you have a sweet treat, cut back on other carbs (like potatoes and bread) during the meal.
- Don't skip meals to save up for a feast. It will be harder to keep your blood sugar in control, and you'll be really hungry and more likely to overeat.
- If you slip up, get right back to healthy eating with your next meal.

2. Outsmart the Buffet

When you face a spread of delicious holiday food, make healthy choices easier:

- Look over the entire buffet table before you pick up your plate. Choose your favorite dishes first.



- Start with vegetables and protein to take the edge off your appetite.
- Eat slowly. It takes at least 20 minutes for your brain to realize you're full.
- Limit alcohol to 1 or 2 drinks. If you do have an alcoholic drink, have it with real food. Alcohol can lower blood sugar and interact with diabetes medicines.
- When you are done eating, move away from the food. Try hanging out by the fireplace.

3. Check your blood sugar

Plan to stay on top of your blood sugars if you have diabetes. Take your medicines and supplements as prescribed, and ask your provider if they need to be adjusted.

4. Fit in Favorites

No food is on the naughty list. Choose the dishes you really love and can't get any other time of year, like Aunt Edna's pumpkin pie. Slow down and savor a small serving, and make sure to count it in your meal plan. If you plan for it, no food needs to be on the naughty list.

5. Keep Moving

You've got a lot on your plate this time of year, and physical activity can get crowded out. But being active is your secret holiday weapon; it can help make up for eating more than usual and reduce stress during this most stressful time of year. Get moving with friends and family, such as taking a walk after a holiday meal.

6. Get Your Zzz's

Going out more and staying out later often means cutting back on sleep. Sleep loss can make it harder to control your blood sugar, and when you're sleep deprived you'll tend to eat more and prefer high-fat, high-sugar food. Aim for 7 to 8 hours per night to guard against mindless eating. Most of all, remember what the season is about—celebrating and connecting with the people you care about. When you focus more on the fun, it's easier to focus less on the food.

