

# 5 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 from the Centers for Disease Control that can help:

## 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:

- Have a small plate of the foods you like best and then move away from the buffet table.
- Start with vegetables to take the edge off your appetite.
- Eat slowly. It takes at least 20 minutes for your brain to realize you're full.
- Avoid or limit alcohol. If you do have an alcoholic drink, have it with food. Alcohol can lower blood sugar and interact with diabetes medicines.

Also plan to stay on top of your blood sugar. Check it more often during the holidays, and if you take medicine, ask your doctor if the amount needs to be adjusted.

## 3. 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.

## 4. 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.

## **5. 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.

## **Holiday Hacks**

- Have pumpkin pie instead of pecan pie. Even with a dollop of whipped cream, you'll cut calories and sugar by at least a third.
- 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.

Article from The Centers for Disease Control - <http://www.cdc.gov/features/diabetesmanagement/>

For more information, please feel free to contact the AgriLife Extension Office at 903-473-4580 or visit us at [rains.agrilife.org](http://rains.agrilife.org). We are also on Facebook at [Facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences). Go and “Like” our page to keep up with the latest news, events, and programs offered by Family & Consumer Sciences in Rains County.