

Family and Community Health “Connections” in Tom Green County

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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10 Tips for Holiday Wellness

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1. Start your day with water. Keep an 8-16 ounce glass of water by your bed. Drink it each morning. The goal is to begin hydrating first thing every morning, an action that not only gets the physical body’s systems going but also sets the tone for your day.

2. Holiday Parties & Alcohol If you are hosting create a healthy cocktail mix you can enjoy alone or use as a mixer with your favorite spirit. You can use fresh vegetable juice, fruit puree, fermented beverages like kombucha, or spiced nut or seed milk. Here are some ideas: Dairy Free Egg Nog, Green Juice Mixers, Strawberry Basil Spritzer, or a Green Margarita. Garnish with fresh herbs or your favorite spices.

Be sure to drink water, especially if you are drinking alcohol! Even some water is better than none and you will thank yourself in the morning for hydrating.

3. Don’t skip meals or “save calories for later”. When you skip meals your metabolism slows, blood sugar drops, and your hormones react by storing fat. Stick to eating small, balanced meals every 3-4 hours which will keep your blood sugar stable.

4. Add a green smoothie or juice to your day. Keep your recipe simple and add spinach, kale, or spirulina powder. You can also add spirulina powder to your favorite quality bottled juice.

5. Add fermented food or drink to your diet. Fermented foods are alive and that’s why they fizz and expand in their containers. They provide us with beneficial enzymes that improve digestion. Adding fermented foods to your holiday diet is a sure way to keep your gut health strong and flowing. Add a side of kimchi or fermented vegetables to your eggs at breakfast, your salad at lunch, or with dinner. Drink a local high quality kombucha or kefir in the morning with little to nothing in your stomach.

6. Sleep and Rest. Find time for quiet so you can recharge. Keep your regular sleep schedule and try to avoid sleeping in or staying up late. Give yourself one alarm-clock free day so you can rest fully. Don’t bring electronics to bed and if you do, put them on airplane mode. Consider taking a nap when needed.

7. Self-Care. The holidays bring up emotion across the spectrum. Interactions with friends, family, co-workers, and strangers can bring those to the surface. Create time and space for you – time solely for your enjoyment and relaxation.

8. Remember what the holidays truly mean. Don’t put pressure on yourself around buying gifts, being the best host/hostess, decorator, etc. The holidays are about enjoying our loved ones and the gifts we already have in our lives, regardless of our religion or spiritual beliefs or the holiday we celebrate. If you choose to purchase gifts stay within a budget and if a budget isn’t already part of your regular practice, try creating an affordable bulk gift.

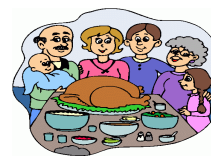
9. Breathe for mindful eating and consumption. Take a moment right now. Breathe in slowly and feel your breath as it moves in and slowly out. Don’t react or respond immediately to any stimuli. Allow yourself to fully observe and absorb your experience by connecting with your natural rhythmic breath. Take deep, slow breaths while you eat food – all food, including the “sinful” ones, the ones that offer a buzz or create guilt – breath into the experience of whatever you are bringing into the body. Enjoy and observe moment to moment.

10. Accountability. Find somebody to hold you accountable – a friend, personal trainer, holistic health coach, therapist, or co-worker. Hold yourself accountable through the holiday season to stay hydrated, get enough rest, create self-care, moderation, breathing, and staying true to the holiday spirit whatever that means to you. Commit to 1-3 things on this list.

<https://healthylivingmarket.com/10-tips-for-holiday-wellness/>



Holidays and Diabetes



Often, people with **diabetes** feel restricted in what they can eat, and those feelings may be especially strong during the holiday season when parties abound and rich, sugary and salty foods are seemingly everywhere.

1. Lighten up holiday recipes

You'll want to reduce the sugar and other carbohydrates, like white flour, white rice and other processed grains, in your meal.

It's also important to trim the fat. In baking recipes that call for oil, you can usually cut the amount of oil in half, and if you're concerned about how moist the baked product will be, substitute half the amount of oil required with unsweetened apple sauce.

Finally, try using only healthful monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils, such as canola or olive oil, when you cook or bake.

2. Let the plate be your guide when making choices

Keep an eye on the amount of food you eat, because eating too much can affect your blood sugar levels. A good rule of thumb for your lean meat portion is that it be about the size of a deck of cards. Carbohydrate servings, such as pasta or rice, should be about the size of a fist.

An easy strategy for portion control is to think of your plate being cut into four sections:

- **Lean protein** — should take up one quarter of your plate
- **Carbohydrates** (such as grains, pasta and some vegetables like potatoes and corn) — should occupy another quarter of your plate
- **Green vegetables & other nonstarchy vegetables** (such as salads, broccoli, green beans, carrots, cauliflower, asparagus, etc.) — should take up the remaining half your plate. Just make sure not to cook those veggies in oil or butter, or drown them in heavy dressings, dips or sauces— and make mindful choices when preparing your plate.

Pick your favorite high-carbohydrate or high-fat food and have a reasonable serving of that, but then cut back in other areas. For example, you could decide that you'd like to have a serving of sweet potatoes instead of a serving of bread or mashed potatoes. So you're substituting one carbohydrate for another, not eating both.

3. Exercise at least 30 minutes, five times a week
Don't take a holiday break from physical activity. A regular exercise program can improve blood sugars, decrease the risk of heart disease, and help you lose weight — even at a time when most Americans gain. You don't have to do 30 minutes at a time, either. If you find yourself crunched for time during the holiday season, try doing two 15-minute workouts or three 10-minute stints.

However, talk to your health care provider before you start a new exercise program or modify your existing one. He or she may want to do a few tests first.

If you have complications related to your diabetes, like neuropathy or retinopathy, there are certain types of exercise that you should avoid. Tell your doctor what kind of exercise you want to do so adjustments can be made to your medicine schedule or meal plan. And remember, it's important to check your sugars prior to vigorous exercise.

Keep an eye on the amount of food you eat, because eating too much can affect your blood sugar levels.

4. Manage stress as best you can.

The holidays can be an extremely stressful time for many of us. But stress, both physical and mental, can send your blood sugar levels out of whack.

Consider a stress management workshop to help you learn better coping methods, or try a relaxing activity such as yoga, meditation or deep breathing exercises.

5. Kick the cigarette habit.

If you're a smoker, make quitting your No. 1 New Year's resolution

While smoking is bad for everyone's health, it is especially harmful for people with diabetes. Nicotine in cigarette smoke causes large and small blood vessels to harden and narrow, resulting in reduced blood flow to the rest of your body.

Because people with diabetes already have a greater risk of developing health problems like heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, nerve damage, foot problems and more, smoking makes the risks that much greater. These tips aren't just for diabetics — they're good advice for anyone who's trying to lead a healthier lifestyle and prevent serious health problems, including diabetes, down the road. It's important to start taking steps now to keep yourself and your family healthy for life.

<https://www.rush.edu/news/holidays-and-diabetes>

NO PEEKING: KEEP ONLINE SHOPPING SECRET AND SMART

The National Retail Federation surveyed holiday shoppers and found that more than half (56 percent) plan to shop online this year. But with online shopping, it can be hard to keep holiday purchases a secret. In a household where everyone is connected and a world where browsing history drives marketing, how do you keep your past searches from popping up as advertisements when the next person uses the laptop or tablet?

Stop the Snooping

It has become big business to track consumer habits online. Data tracks spending, sites you visit, and how much time you spend there. Retailers use this data to encourage spending. This is why advertisements for particular items may pop up for months after you searched for or bought something similar. You will not be able to entirely block data tracking. However, there are a few tricks you can try to minimize it.



- ⇒ Delete your cookies. “Cookies” are bits of information stored on a user’s computer that help websites function properly. For example, when you put an item in a shopping cart, cookies tell the computer to keep it there until checkout. Cookies are used for storing log-in information, preferences, and more.
- ⇒ Clear your browsing history, which remembers the websites you’ve visited and forms you’ve completed.
- ⇒ Clear your cache, which houses temporary files to speed up browsing. <https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/>

You're probably paying too much for stuff you buy online. Shopping online is more popular than ever — it's fast, convenient, and you don't have to wear your mask. But unless you're serious about price-checking, you may be overpaying every time you place an order. Here's the good news: There's easy ways to automatically find deals online, and they are totally free.

How to Find Better Deals When You Shop Online

One Is Capital One Shopping, and it'll help you save money whenever you shop on the web and see discounts while you browse. When you're shopping on Amazon, Capital One Shopping instantly searches thousands of other sellers — including big chains like Walmart and Target — for a better price. You can also set up price-drop alerts on items so that when they go on sale you'll be the first to know. When you're ready to check out, Capital One Shopping will attempt to apply any available codes in its database using info gathered from millions of members. As an added perk, you'll earn loyalty credits whenever you purchase from Capital One Shopping-partnered stores. These credits can then be redeemed for gift cards from places like Macy's, eBay, and Barnes & Noble.

Capital One Shopping has helped its customers save more than \$70 million in the last year, and with just a few clicks you can start saving too.

Wikibuy is another helpful tool that comes as both a browser extension and an app, so just add it to your device and you're good to go.

<https://moneywise.com/a/find-better-deals-when-you-shop-online>

WINTER SQUASH



Eating vegetables can help prevent obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes. A large number of our calories should come from vegetables. We should eat many types of vegetables because nutrients vary.

SEASON: Harvested August through October

NUTRITION FACTS: Winter squash, which includes acorn squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, and other varieties, is low in fat and sodium and an excellent source of vitamin A and fiber.

SELECTION: Winter squash should be heavy for its size with a hard, tough rind that is free of blemishes or soft spots.

STORAGE: Store in a cool, dry place. Use within a few weeks for acorn, use within one month of purchasing for other varieties.

PREPARATION

- ⇒ **TO STEAM:** Wash, peel, and remove seeds. Cut squash into 2-inch cubes or quarter, leaving rind on (it will remove easily after cooking). Bring 1 inch of water to a boil in a saucepan and place squash on a rack or basket in the pan. Do not immerse it in water. Cover the pan tightly and steam the squash 30–40 minutes or until tender.
- ⇒ **TO MICROWAVE:** Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Place it in a baking dish and cover the dish with plastic wrap. Microwave until tender, using these guidelines:
 - Acorn squash—1/2 squash, 5–8 minutes; 1 squash, 8 1/2–11 1/2 minutes.
 - Butternut squash—2 pieces, 3–4 1/2 minutes.
 - Hubbard squash—(1/2-pound pieces)—2 pieces, 4–6½ minutes.
- ⇒ **TO BAKE:** Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Smaller squash can be cut in half; larger squash should be cut into portions. Remove seeds and place squash in a baking dish. Bake at 400°F for 1 hour or until tender. Seeds can be toasted at 350°F for 20 minutes.

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Tom Green County EEA News

The next EEA meeting will be held on:
 January 12th at 9:30am
 At the Tom Green Extension Office
 Program: Transportation for the Elderly
 Hostess: Helen Roach

Merry Christmas
 Y'ALL!!

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Family & Community Health

“Connections”

is provided by these Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Community Health Agents:

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