
Diabetes Life Lines



A newsletter from your county Extension office
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Holiday Feasts

The story goes that holiday festivals originated from the times of the peasants. They were the few occasions of the year when peasants, who for most of the year endured hollow, rumbling stomachs, could really fill up. Today most people in this country rarely suffer from hunger, but we still prepare the feast and gorge ourselves as if we were starving the rest of the year.

The holiday season should be a very special time set aside to share with family and loved ones. Unfortunately, holiday customs seem to revolve around eating. You meet friends for a holiday lunch. You attend parties with loads of tempting foods and drinks. You bake holiday treats.

Family get-togethers involve more food than anyone can possibly eat. If you have diabetes, it can be a real challenge to maintain the self-discipline to keep your diabetes well-controlled.

The good news is that you can keep your diabetes in control and still fit virtually any food into a healthy meal plan. The bad news is that you'll have to limit the quantity of food. But, don't despair. Don't think of your meal as a feast. Instead, select the amount of food you usually eat to keep your blood glucose in control. Keep in mind that foods with carbohydrate have the most effect on blood glucose levels. If you count carbohydrates, it's fairly easy to keep a handle on the increase in blood glucose after meals. Go ahead and have a small piece of pumpkin pie, but eat less of other carbohydrate foods in the same meal so you stay within your usual carbohydrate range. In general, you'll need to eat smaller quantities of foods that contain higher amounts of carbohydrate. If you adjust your insulin at each meal based on the amount



of carbohydrates you plan to eat, you can cruise through the holidays with your diabetes in control.

Don't forget that many people tend to gain a little extra weight over the holidays. As we get older, we realize that those few extra pounds are extra hard to get rid of after the holidays. As you've observed, many people simply just keep those extra pounds from year to year. Then, before you know it, you're weighing an extra 20 pounds and buying bigger sizes. It's much easier to prevent the extra weight by keeping the portions reasonable and eating fewer high-fat foods.

Here are some tips to help you stay in control and prevent the holiday bulge:

- C Make time for physical activity despite your busy schedule. It can relieve your stress, improve your mood, improve your blood glucose levels, and help with weight control. Go walking with a friend or family member around the neighborhood or go mall-walking. Split up your daily exercise goal into two 15-20 minute sessions if it's easier to fit into your busy schedule.
- C Fill up more on low-calorie salads and vegetables. If you meet the goal of 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, not only will you get more

nutrients, but you'll also tend to eat fewer high-fat foods.

- C Focus on holiday activities that don't involve food like holiday decorating, attending holiday musicals or plays, caroling, shopping, and gift-giving.
- C At holiday events, pay more attention to mingling with people than eating. The more you talk, the less you'll eat.
- C Avoid buffets when possible. And, definitely avoid standing near the buffet table where you might be tempted to pick up more food.
- C Share a meal or dessert with your dinner companion when eating out or take home a doggie bag. Portions are usually much larger than we need.

For the entire holiday season make it your goal to eat in moderation, stay physically active, and keep your blood glucose in control. Surround yourself with those who care about you and have a wonderful holiday!

Potential New Treatment for Diabetes

A new injectable drug that improves blood glucose control and doesn't cause hypoglycemia or weight gain? Sound too good to be true? A synthetic version of a hormone in the body that works along with insulin called amylin is now in the works.

Although the lack of effective insulin

if often thought to be a major reason for uncontrolled blood glucose levels, recent discoveries have identified other factors that contribute to uncontrolled blood glucose levels in diabetes. Amylin is a hormone produced in the pancreas along with insulin. It is normally secreted along with insulin in response to eating. Amylin helps control blood glucose levels by causing the pancreas to produce more insulin when blood glucose levels are high. It also helps prevent the liver from releasing too much glucose at mealtime. All people with type 1 diabetes and many with type 2 diabetes produce less insulin than needed to control blood glucose levels. When the pancreas begins producing less insulin, it also produces less amylin. Researchers believe that replacing amylin in people with diabetes who are deficient may be one of the factors that helps control blood glucose levels.

Research has shown that the synthetic form of amylin can slow and lessen the rise in blood glucose after meals in people with diabetes without causing hypoglycemia and weight gain. This may potentially help many people taking insulin who resist keeping blood glucose levels in tight control for fear of hypoglycemia. Amylin has also been shown to reduce appetite and possibly help with weight control. This may prove

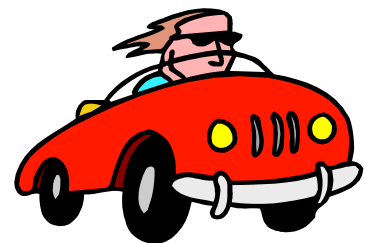
to be a major advantage for people with type 2 diabetes who often have difficulty losing weight.

The synthetic form of amylin, called pramlintide, is taken by injection. The hope is that a long-acting form of the drug will be available to inject only on a once-a-month basis rather than before each meal. Pramlintide, developed by Amylin Pharmaceuticals, has submitted the drug to the Food and Drug Administration for approval.

Preventing Hypoglycemia While Driving

You've heard the stories about someone with diabetes either getting mistakenly arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) or being involved in a serious automobile accident. If you take insulin and think it could never happen to you, think again.

Thirty-four percent of participants in a recent study with type 1 diabetes reported experiencing severe hypoglycemia (having either loss of consciousness, seizure, stupor, or inability to treat themselves) while driving during the previous 6 months. Studies show that



even mild hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) can have a major effect on your driving ability. Even blood glucose levels of 60-65 mg/dl can affect reaction time, attention, concentration, and the ability to make decisions. These are skills that we assume to be very important for driving safety.

Many people treated with insulin have lost the ability to recognize low blood glucose levels (hypoglycemia unawareness). They are missing the early warning signs of hypoglycemia like shakiness, nervousness, sweating, anxiety, and rapid heartbeat. Their first symptom may be the inability to think clearly. These people can have a severe hypoglycemic reaction unexpectedly. They are more likely to drive when blood glucose levels are too low for safe driving. People with diabetes also often fail to treat symptoms of low blood glucose right away. Any delay in treatment can have very serious consequences while driving.

If you have insulin-treated diabetes you should check your blood glucose levels frequently throughout the day and especially before driving. A good rule of thumb is to treat blood glucose levels below 80 mg/dl before getting in the car, even if you have no symptoms. Always carry some type of emergency sugar (glucose tablets or gel are convenient) in

your car and in your purse/pocket and use it as soon as you feel symptoms of low blood glucose. Don't wait until you get home. Always carry some diabetes identification on you.

If you have hypoglycemia unawareness, work with your diabetes health care team to learn how to identify patterns to use as warning cues when your blood glucose is low. Always check your blood glucose before you drive and let more people around you know how to treat your low blood glucose.

Automobile accidents in people with

Prevent Hypoglycemia While Driving

- Check blood glucose before driving
- Do not drive until blood glucose is over 80 mg/dl
- Carry emergency sugar in car (glucose tablets or gel)
- Carry diabetes ID

insulin-treated diabetes are much too common. But, they can be prevented. If you take insulin, take all precautions to ensure that your blood glucose level is in a safe range to avoid dangerous situations. Not only will you be protecting yourself and those in your car, but many innocent people on the road.

Recipe Corner

Mushroom and Barley Stuffing

This fiber-rich, tasty stuffing makes a great vegetarian side dish. You may wish to use low-sodium chicken broth in place of part of the water.

2 tablespoons olive oil	1 ½ cups pearl barley
1 medium onion, chopped	7 cups water (or low-sodium chicken broth)
4 large carrots, peeled and diced	Fresh ground pepper and salt to taste
2 cups sliced shitake mushrooms	

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and saute for 7 minutes. Add the carrots and saute for 10 minutes. Add the mushrooms and saute for 5 minutes. Add the barley and water and bring to a boil. Cover, lower the heat, and simmer for 60 minutes until barley is tender. Add in salt and pepper. Stuff a bird with this mixture or serve separately.

Serves: 13 Serving size: ½ cup

Carbohydrate Choices: 2 ½ Exchanges: 2 starch, 1 vegetable

Calories: 185 Carbohydrate: 37 grams Fat: 3 grams

Sodium: 30 milligrams Cholesterol: 0 milligrams Fiber: 8 grams

Recipe reprinted with permission from the American Diabetes Association.

Suggested Menu

<u>Menu Item</u>	<u>Exchanges</u>	<u>Carbohydrate</u>
1 cup spinach salad	Free	†
1 Tbs. vinaigrette dressing	1 fat	0
½ cup acorn squash	1 starch	15 grams
½ cup <i>Mushroom and Barley Stuffing</i> *	2 starch, 1 vegetable	37 grams
3 ounces roasted turkey	3 lean meat	0
1 tablespoons reduced-calorie margarine	1 fat	0

* *This month's featured recipe* † insignificant

Note: Portions may need to be adjusted for your meal plan.

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Dear Friend,

Diabetes Life Lines is a bi-monthly publication sent to you by your local county Extension agent.

It is written by Food and Nutrition Specialists at the University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. This newsletter brings you the latest information on diabetes, nutrition, the diabetic exchange system, recipes, and important events.

If you would like more information, please contact your local county Extension office.

Yours truly,

County Extension Agent

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