



# Diabetes: Dealing with Holidays

## THE CHALLENGE

Holiday time can be full of food temptations. Busy schedules make it hard to work in regular exercise and healthy meals. But don't despair. With a little planning, you can enjoy the holidays.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Know your diabetic meal plan. Then you will know what and how much to eat when you are dining away from home.
- Prepare, portion and freeze ahead meals that are lower in sugar, fat and sodium. Then you can reheat them quickly when you are very busy.
- Schedule your exercise before you schedule holiday activities. Be flexible, but if you don't plan exercise time, it won't happen.
- For your own party, choose foods that fit your meal plan. Go to the library or bookstore and get diabetes cookbooks and magazines that feature healthy holiday recipes. The American Diabetes Association web site ([www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)) also features a new recipe each day.
- Focus on one or two diabetes self-management goals during the holidays. No one is perfect, but you can stick to one or two habits that are good for you.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN THE SEASON ARRIVES

- Have active parties. Plan parties around caroling, house decorating, holiday card making or walks to see neighborhood decorations.
- If you are invited to a party, call ahead for the menu. Offer to bring a dish you can enjoy without guilt.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN THE SEASON ARRIVES (CONTINUED)



- At the buffet table, survey the offerings before you dig in. Only put on your plate what you really want. Use a small plate and leave plenty of space around your portions. Then sit down and eat away from the food. Don't go back for seconds.
- Never drink alcohol without your doctor's permission. Insulin and some diabetes pills do not mix well with alcohol. Never have more than one or two drinks. A serving of alcohol is 1<sup>1/2</sup> ounces distilled liquor, 12 ounces of light beer or 4 ounces of dry wine.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY EATING

- Plain basic food is always the safest. Be careful of sauces, gravies, cheese sauces, cream sauces and casseroles.
- Fill half your plate with low calorie vegetables.
- Eat a small roll with a small amount of margarine.
- Mashed potatoes tend to be lower in carbohydrate and fat than a sweet potato casserole.
- Fruit from the fruit basket is the best dessert. If you must have a regular dessert, have a very small piece.
- Coffee and unsweetened tea are free foods. Add artificial sweetener and skim milk if needed.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What diabetes self management goal will I focus on during the holidays?
2. What nutritious recipes can I fix ahead so I can eat well while I am busy?
3. How can I get more exercise during the holidays?

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