

Meal Planning Carbs, protein, fat, and fiber in food all affect your blood sugar in different ways. Carbs can raise your blood sugar faster and higher than protein or fat. Fiber can help you manage your blood sugar, so carbs that have fiber in them, like sweet potatoes, won't raise your blood sugar as fast as carbs with little or no fiber, such as soda.

Counting Carbs Keeping track of how many carbs you eat and setting a limit for each meal can help keep your blood sugar levels in your target range. Work with your doctor or dietitian to find out how many carbs you can eat each day and at each meal.

Another way to manage the carbs you eat is using the glycemic index (GI). The GI ranks carbs in food from 0 to 100 according to how much they affect blood sugar. Low GI foods are more slowly digested and absorbed by your body, so you stay full longer. They don't have a big impact on your blood sugar. High GI foods are digested and absorbed more quickly. They have a bigger impact on your blood sugar, and you'll get hungry sooner. Some examples:

- **High GI:** Bread (white and wheat), mashed potatoes, watermelon, fruit juice
- **Low GI:** Beans, brown rice, tomatoes, yogurt, apples, milk

The Plate Method It's easy to eat more food than you need without realizing it. The plate method is a simple, visual way to make sure you get enough non-starchy vegetables and lean protein, and limit the amount of higher-carb food that has the greatest potential to spike your blood sugar.

Start with a 9-inch dinner plate: Fill half with non-starchy vegetables, such as salad, green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and carrots.

Fill one quarter with a lean protein, such as chicken, turkey, beans, tofu, or eggs.

Fill a quarter with a grain or starchy food, such as potatoes, rice, or pasta (or skip the starch altogether and double up on non-starchy veggies).



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Diabetes Newsletter

October 2020

The Holidays & Healthy Eating to Prevent/Manage Diabetes



If you plan for it, no food needs to be on the naughty list.

COVID-19/Coronavirus is most risky for people with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions and those who are older. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, diarrhea, and difficulty breathing. If you have these symptoms, call your ATC physician. For COVID-19 information & resources, go to: www.accesstocare.org/resources

Our goal always is to help our members stay as healthy as possible for a happy and productive life! To help achieve healthy living, this newsletter for members focuses on diabetes education, prevention and management.

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Here's 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:

1. Holiday-Proof Your Plan

You may not be able to control what food you're served, and you're going to see other people eating 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 manage your blood sugar, 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.

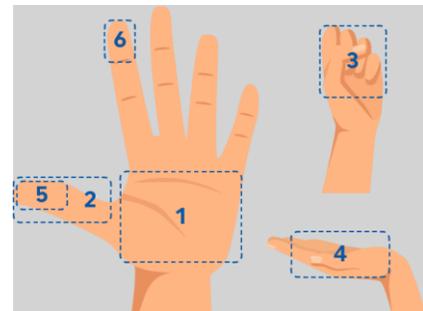
5. Get Your Zzz's

Going out more and staying out later often means cutting back on sleep. Sleep loss can make it harder to manage 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's easier to 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. **3 ounces of meat, fish, or poultry:** Palm of hand (no fingers)
2. **1 ounce of meat or cheese:** Thumb (tip to base)
3. **1 cup or 1 medium fruit:** Fist
4. **1–2 ounces of nuts or pretzels:** Cupped hand
5. **1 tablespoon:** Thumb tip (tip to 1st joint)
6. **1 teaspoon:** Fingertip (tip to 1st joint)

*) A meal plan is your guide for when, what, and how much to eat to get the nutrition you need while keeping your blood sugar levels in your target range. A good meal plan will take into account your goals, tastes, and lifestyle, as well as any medicines you're taking. You'll want to plan for regular, balanced meals to avoid high or low blood sugar levels. Eating about the same amount of carbs at each meal can help.