

# Tips for a Healthy Holiday

'Tis the season for family, friends, festivities, and constant tasty temptations! Holiday celebrations can extend for weeks and often disrupt healthy eating schedules and habits. However, it is possible to stay on track while still enjoying the season! Below are some tips for healthy eating at your next holiday party.



## 1. Have a plan.

- To help keep your blood sugars regulated, follow your normal eating schedule. If your holiday dinner is later than usual, eat a light snack at your normal mealtime and stick to a smaller portion when dinner is served.
- Offer to bring your favorite healthy dish to the party.
- If you decide to have a sweet treat, cut back on the other carbs (potatoes, bread, etc.) served with the meal.
- Do not skip meals to save up for the holiday dinner—this could lead to extreme hunger and overeating.
- If you slip up and overindulge, just get back to healthy eating with your next meal!
- If you are diabetic or prediabetic, be sure to monitor your blood sugar more closely during the holiday season. If you notice any trends outside your norm, contact your healthcare provider.

## 2. Work the food table wisely.

- Start with a small plate of your favorite foods, then move away from the buffet.
- Take the edge off your hunger by starting with veggies.
- Eat slowly—it takes your brain around 20 minutes to realize it is full.
- Limit or completely avoid alcohol. If you do have an alcoholic drink, make sure to have it with food. (Alcohol can decrease blood sugar and interact with diabetic medication.)

## 3. Allow yourself to enjoy your favorites.

- Remember: foods are not “naughty” or “nice.” No food is completely off limits—just count it in your meal plan.
- Choose dishes you really love and don’t normally get to have throughout the year.
- Enjoy a small serving and slow down to savor it.

## 4. Stay active.

- Don’t put exercise on the backburner over the holidays. Maintaining or increasing your physical activity can help make up for eating more than usual while also reducing the stress of the season.
- Make exercising easier to schedule by breaking it up into small, 10-minute chunks throughout the day.
- Spread the cheer by encouraging a family member or friend to go on a walk after the holiday meal!

## 5. Prioritize your sleep.

- Holiday celebrations can lead to late nights and lost sleep, which may ultimately cause sleep deprivation, increase your appetite (while also influencing you to prefer foods higher in fat and sugar), and negatively affect your blood sugars.
- Try not to stray too far from your normal sleep schedule, and aim to get 7-8 hours of quality sleep per night.
- Scheduling some daily “me time”—whether it be napping, reading a chapter of a book, taking a hot bath, or another activity—can also help you to refocus and reenergize before the next celebration.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))