

# November: American Diabetes Month

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The holidays are typically filled with parties, celebrations and family gatherings. But the spotlight



on food and eating during the holiday season can be challenging, especially for families dealing with diabetes. November is American Diabetes Month® and

Thanksgiving can be a time of great anxiety for people with diabetes because it is so focused on food. This year, plan in advance to take the guesswork and stress out of Thanksgiving, so you can fully enjoy the day and keep your diabetes management on track. Check out the following tips to help you have a healthier Thanksgiving holiday.

## Healthy Holiday Tips for Diabetics:



### Meal timing matters.

Many families eat holiday meals at odd times of the day. For some, the Thanksgiving meal may not happen until mid-afternoon. Plan in advance and make adjustments if the

meal doesn't line up with your regular meal schedule. If you take insulin injections or a pill that lowers blood glucose, a snack may be needed at your normal meal time to prevent a low blood glucose reaction. Check with your health care team about this and discuss an eating plan with them.



### Don't skip meals.

Don't skip meals or snacks earlier in the day to "save" calories and carbohydrates for the feast later on.

Skipping meals makes it harder to keep your blood

glucose in control and arriving hungry may increase your chances of overeating.



### Be more active.

One reason people have problems managing diabetes and weight during the holidays is a lack of physical activity.

A good way to make up

for eating more than usual is to be active. Start a new tradition this year that involves getting more physical activity and doing things that don't involve food. It is never too late to be physically active. Find others who are trying to be active, join a group for exercise or support or find a walking buddy, and work together to reach your goals. Aim for 30 minutes on most days.



### Bring what you like.

Bring what you like to the party or gathering. Instead of spending time getting worried about what will be on the menu, offer to

bring your favorite diabetes-friendly dish. It could be a low-sugar or low-fat version of a traditional recipe or something new and different to spice up the holidays.



### Be selective & downsize portions.

This year, try picking out your favorite foods or dishes and pass on the other options. If stuffing is your favorite, then pass on

the rolls. Have sweet potatoes or mashed potatoes instead of putting both on your plate. If you want to sample more than just your favorites make your portions smaller. If you plan on having dessert, reduce or cut out another carbohydrate food during the main course. Remember not to pile up your plate on the first round, eat slowly, enjoy the meal, and resist going back for seconds.

**Know how. Know now.**



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The most important thing about managing diabetes during the holiday season is to plan ahead. Schedule time for physical activity on most days this holiday season. Talk to your health care team ahead of time if you need to make adjustments in your medication or insulin because of the timing of holiday meals or travel. Manage holiday stress by sorting out your plans in advance.

### **UNL Extension Resource: Control Diabetes for Life**

- Control Diabetes for Life is an educational program that is offered 1-3 times a year in various locations in Nebraska. The sessions are broadcast to several locations throughout the state and recorded for later viewing. Participants learn to control diabetes while preparing nutritious and delicious foods that are low in sugar and fat.
- You do not have to be diabetic to participate; non-diabetic participants have included those with family members who have diabetes and health professionals.
- This program is offered free of charge.

#### **Control Diabetes for Life Program Results:**

- In 2010-2011, 543 people participated in UNL Extension *Control Diabetes for Life* programs.
- Calculated savings in medical care for all participants could equal \$510,000.
- The programs helped participants establish new goals for diabetes self management, techniques to control blood sugar levels and understanding the benefits of physical activity.

#### **Sample Comments from Past Participants:**

“I have felt reinforced by this series. I always learn something and this year asked many questions about an upcoming surgery and applied those thoughts, causing me less stress.”

“I have enjoyed this series! I especially like the handouts. I love the recipes! I use to hate exercise and this program showed me ways to enjoy it and work it in my schedule 5 days a week!”

### **Control Diabetes for Life - November 2011**

The theme for the November 2011 session is “Options for Control.” Topics that will be covered during the two-hour program include:

- Managing your medications
- Are there good and bad carbs?
- Creative casseroles
- Recipe details and explanations
- Question & answer period with credentialed professionals



Team-teaching the program will be Stacie Petersen, R.N. & Certified Diabetes Educator; Mary Clare Stalp, R.D., L.M.N.T., Deborah Willcox, R.D., L.M.N.T., all of Franciscan Care Services in West Point and Debra Schroeder, UNL Extension Educator in Cuming County.

Email Debra Schroeder at [dschroeder1@unl.edu](mailto:dschroeder1@unl.edu) for details of the session in your area and check out previously recorded sessions and handouts on-line at: <http://food.unl.edu/controldiabetesforlife>. Also, you can scan this QR Code with your mobile device for a direct link!



#### **Sources:**

1. American Diabetes Association. Food and Fitness: Enjoy Thanksgiving. Accessed at: <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/holiday-meal-planning/enjoying-thanksgiving.html>
2. American Diabetes Association. Food and Fitness: Seven Holiday Tips. Accessed at: <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/holiday-meal-planning/seven-holiday-tips.html>
3. American Diabetes Association. Food and Fitness: Planning Ahead. Accessed at: <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/holiday-meal-planning/planning-ahead.html>

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