

Control Diabetes for Life
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Indulge Your Taste Buds

For most Americans the winter months are a time of celebration and indulgences. Sure you want to be part of the festivities but how do you do that and eat healthy at the same time. The cold winter months also find many of us looking to traditional comfort foods that help us to feel warm and cozy lives. Through this program we will share hints that will help you find ways to still enjoy the festivities and comfort foods that have brought you joy in the past. You will still need to keep an eye on the serving sizes but you will be surprised at the satisfaction that food can still deliver.

Healthy Swaps

With the right ingredient swapping you can indulge in most of your favorite foods without suffering the consequences. Try these hints for transforming high-carb indulgences into healthy dishes that won't send your blood sugar soaring. Sometimes you can switch out an ingredient and not even notice the difference. Other times simply adding an extra healthy food to your dish is a great way to increase the nutrition quotient without giving up all that tastes good and is that comfort to you. When making a recipe for the first time modify the recipe with healthier ingredients and amounts that way you only know how the recipe tastes with healthier modifications.

Mashed Potatoes ...To have comforting, creamy mashed potatoes without chalking up 35 grams of carbs in a one-cup serving try this half and half strategy. Use half the amount of potatoes you want for your dish. A medium

potato contains about 33 grams of carbs and 3 grams of fiber per cup. Then use an equal amount of either turnips (about 8 grams of carbs and 3 grams of fiber per cup), rutabagas (about 15 grams of carbs and 3 grams of fiber per cup), cauliflower (about 3 grams of carbs and 2 grams of fiber per cup) or some combination of the three. Boil or microwave the potatoes and vegetables and mash together. Add a mixture of one-half softened butter and one-half healthy, trans-free, vegetable oil spread. Then warm some cream or half & half in the microwave and beat until smooth. Salt and pepper to taste. For extra flavor, add minced garlic (raw or gently cooked) to the butter mixture, or mix in some grated parmesan, Romano, or asiago cheese.

Crunchy Coating ...Some things just aren't the same without a crunchy crust around them but a coating made with flour or bread crumbs can turn a healthy dish into a high carb no-no. With a little creativity you can have your crunch and stay in the healthy eating zone. Great, flavorful substitutions for bread crumbs abound – nuts, seeds, and (unsweetened) whole grain cereal flakes all can be chopped (or crushed) and used to coat fish fillets, chicken, shrimp, veggies, or anything else you'd normally prepare with bread crumbs.

For crab cakes, meat balls and the like, try mixing up a paste of baking powder and beaten egg to use as a binder instead of bread crumbs and egg. (Tip: When making crab cakes use real crab meat, imitation crab contains sugar.)



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Root Beer Float ... If you're vigilant about your sugar intake, one old-fashioned treat that you would never even consider is a root beer float. You can use diet root beer, cream soda, or cola. Otherwise, buy some sugar-free, flavored syrup and mix it with seltzer water. (Make sure the seltzer is new; don't use it if it's even just a tiny bit flat). These syrups are sold in dozens of flavors, so you can experiment with vanilla, cola, cherry, grape, coconut, caramel, etc. Add one scoop of no-sugar added or low-carb ice cream (don't forget to look at carbs, calories and fat when comparing varieties). Depending on the ice cream you choose, you can end up savoring this nostalgic indulgence while taking in only 140 calories and 6 grams of carbs (the stats from one-half cup of Edy's Carb Benefit Vanilla Bean).

French Fries ... Using sweet potatoes or the crunchy vegetable called jicama (pronounced hik'-a-ma); you can enjoy crisp, salty fries now and then without the worry. And since white potatoes can raise blood sugar more rapidly than even table sugar, you're wise to move them onto your "don't go there" list. Peel sweet potatoes and slice lengthwise like steak fries. Toss gently with extra virgin olive oil and seasonings of your choice, bake at 425° F for 10 minutes on each side. Jicama can be sliced thin (like matchsticks) and made either in the oven (the same way but cut the time in half) or fried in a pan with a high-heat oil such as canola oil, grape seed oil or refined sesame oil. You can also slice jicama super-thin like potato chips. Experiment with different spices on your fries, such as onion or garlic salt, paprika, or taco seasoning.

Chocolate Coated Confections ... Do you love strawberries dipped in chocolate? Chocolate covered macadamia nuts? With all the latest news on the health benefits of dark chocolate (and the advent of Splenda), these delicious confections need not be relegated to the "good old days" list. Cover antioxidant-rich berries such as blueberries, blackberries or raspberries with a

coating of high-quality, unsweetened chocolate – and you've nearly got a health food! (Stick to a small handful, of course, and monitor your own reaction.) Place fruit or nuts in the freezer for 30 minutes. Melt a good-quality, unsweetened chocolate in a double boiler, whisking in a bit of cream, hot water, and Splenda to taste. Remove fruit or nuts from the freezer, dip them in the chocolate (using a fork, slotted spoon, or tongs), and spread on wax paper to harden. Store in a zip lock bag and take your homemade candy to the movies.

Beef or Turkey Wrap ... Have you heard about the trick of rolling sliced lunch meats and cheese inside a lettuce leaf? These little roll-ups make for quick and tasty snacks. Large, dark green or red lettuce leaves are a great substitute for a burrito-size, white flour tortilla — which delivers about 60 empty grams of carbohydrate.

Another option is choosing a low carb tortilla (or wrap) made with soy or whole grain flour. Take your wrap one step further on the health meter while also making something a bit more substantial, by doing more than rolling up a few slices of turkey. Lunch meats are notoriously high in sodium, and they also contain nitrites or nitrates, preservatives that are potentially carcinogenic. Use leftovers from beef and pork roasts or baked chicken or turkey that you have prepared in a low sodium manner.

Brown ground turkey or 92% lean ground beef in a sauté pan with some olive oil and spices. You can simply use a dash of salt and pepper or sprinkle on chili powder and a little cayenne if you like a bit of fire. Spoon your seasoned turkey onto your lettuce leaves or low carb wrap; add shredded cheese, diced tomatoes and sunflower seeds. Roll it up and enjoy.

Mac and Cheese ... Mac and cheese has often been a comfort food since we were children. There are ways that you can still enjoy mac and cheese. Cauliflower is a great substitute for white noodles and white rice, because of its

color, versatile texture, and because cauliflower is a member of that ultra-healthy family of cruciferous veggies. People who consume the most of these types of vegetables (cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, and kale) have lower rates of several kinds of cancer, and laboratory tests have shown that certain compounds in cruciferous vegetables actually stop the growth of many types of cancer cells. One way to use cauliflower is to steam or boil it, chop it roughly, and then substitute it for half the macaroni in your favorite reduced-fat mac and cheese recipe. Another option is to make a roasted cauliflower casserole, leaving out the pasta all together. Chop cauliflower into chunks, and arrange in a baking dish. Add two to three cloves of garlic, minced. Drizzle with olive oil, and squeeze a lemon over the pieces. Season with salt and pepper. Bake in a 400° F oven for 20 minutes or until the tops are browned. Remove and sprinkle generously with grated parmesan.

Rice Stand-ins ... Many people are still confused about whether or not white rice is good for you. Also, we know grains are important for health, and rice is very clearly a grain. The nitty-gritty can be found in the difference between a refined grain and a whole grain. White rice is a grain that has been refined – which means the nutrient-dense parts of it have been stripped away, leaving only the sticky, starchy center. This center, or endosperm, is essentially the nutritional equivalent of table sugar, and it has a similarly high impact on blood glucose.

The obvious better choice is brown rice, which is a whole grain rich in beneficial phytochemicals and fiber. A diet rich in whole grains is linked to decreased insulin resistance and increased insulin sensitivity, as well as an overall decreased risk of type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases. However, brown rice isn't the only choice. When brown rice doesn't fit your needs — or if you just aren't a fan of its texture and flavor — other great whole-grain options abound. Try barley, buckwheat (kasha), bulgur, or quinoa. Each of these grains has a

slightly different texture and flavor, but all can be substituted for rice. They can be cooked on the stovetop in boiling water (or better yet, use low-sodium chicken, beef, or vegetable broth). Read package directions for amounts and time. Always test in the last five to 10 minutes to make sure the grains don't become mushy.

Eat Frittatas ... The problem with quiche is generally the pie crust. A standard, 9-inch, ready-to-bake pie crust contains 41 grams of fat, 63 grams of carbohydrates, and 818 milligrams of sodium. The good news is you don't need the crust. Frittatas are delicious, can be made with an infinite variety of ingredients (i.e., whatever you have in your kitchen), and stand alone beautifully in nice, triangle slices. Heat olive oil (or spray with aerosol olive oil) in a 10-inch, sauté pan that can go in the oven. Add garlic, onions, shallots, spinach, leeks — whatever you have. Reduce heat to medium-low. Beat 8 eggs (or replace each egg with two egg whites to reduce cholesterol) with skim milk, salt, and pepper, and pour into pan. Lift your veggies with a spatula so egg mixture gets underneath. Once the sides lift easily from the pan, and the top is beginning to set, remove from heat. Sprinkle with grated cheese, layer with sliced tomatoes and herbs. Bake in a 350° oven for 10 minutes or until center is cooked through.

Split Pea Soup ... When it's cold outside, sometimes there's nothing better than a steaming crock of chowder, bisque, or any creamy, rich soup. Cream-style corn and corn chowder are right up there with mashed potatoes when it comes to winter comfort foods. However, on the health meter and in terms of glycemic impact, many of these comforting choices rank pretty low. A somewhat old fashioned, off-the-beaten-track, healthy alternative? Split pea. Split peas are relatively low in carbohydrates and have a lower glycemic index than some other legumes, and because they are quick cooking and have the consistency of some favorite American comfort foods, split pea soup makes for a great meal on a chilly day.

Add 2 quarts of cold water to 2 ¼ cups of well-rinsed split peas. Let soak overnight, or just simmer for 2 minutes and soak for an hour. Then, bring to a boil; turn down the heat, and simmer covered for about an hour and a half. Add seasonings (salt, fresh pepper, nutmeg) and diced vegetables, such as onion, celery, carrots, leeks, and cook uncovered until veggies are tender.

Eat It Whole ... It's a general rule of thumb, straight from the dietitians: Eating foods in their whole state, rather than mashed, pureed, juiced, etc., generally lessens the impact on blood sugar. For example, choose a baked potato over mashed, choose a whole apple over applesauce, and always choose the whole vegetable or the whole fruit rather than juicing it, so that you get all the beneficial fiber (which, don't forget, cancels out some of those carbs) and the other nutrients stored in the skins and pulp. An excellent illustration can be found in an orange. When you drink orange juice, you get the vitamin C but not the beneficial fiber and phytonutrients that come from the pulp. Even if you buy orange juice with pulp, you're still not getting any of the fibrous white membrane, which is where the phytonutrients hide.

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Nutrition science research is finding, increasingly, that it is not one substance or another that gives plant foods their disease-fighting power, but the interaction of these vitamins, antioxidants, and other plant chemicals. So, eat things the way Mother Nature presents them, and you won't miss out on any hidden health benefits.

Winter is a time that we are less physically active and must carefully measure portion sizes. Even though the hints given above will cut some of the carbs, foods will still contain some carbs and all foods have calories that need to be counted. Learn what a half cup serving of your favorite food looks like to save on extra carbs and calories. Fill half of your plate with fresh vegetables and fruits at each meal. When the true hunger pains are calling either brush your teeth or chew a piece of sugarless gum to signal your body that it is not time to eat.