# Tips for Enjoying Thanksgiving With Diabetes

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## Top Tips for Thanksgiving With Diabetes

Thanksgiving is a recipe for overindulgence: the average Thanksgiving dinner guest will consume around 2,000 calories over the course of that single meal, which is practically a whole day's worth!

Ultimately, you have control over how much you eat – and the health effects you'll have to deal with afterwards – but willpower may not be enough when you're in the moment. Learn how you can control your diabetes symptoms, stick to a healthy diet plan, and still enjoy the treats of the season.

### Safe, Smart, and Satisfying Ways to Indulge

Thanksgiving is a feast for the eyes as much as for the stomach, and that leads people to pile up their plates without concern for the limits of their appetites. Consider a few clever approaches to keep you satisfied without jeopardizing your diabetes diet:

- **Favor variety over quantity –** Help yourself to a taste of all the things you've been looking forward to eating, but before you spoon it onto your plate, cut the portion in half. Remember, non-starchy veggies should take up half your plate, and once you start layering food on top of other food, you've wandered into the danger zone.
- **Resist going back for seconds –** For many people, it's the second or third trip to the buffet that does the dietary damage, so avoid the issue altogether by vowing to only take one plateful. Knowing that a second helping isn't an option should help you slow down and savor each bite, which is also much better for your digestion and your blood sugar levels.
- **What out for deceptively unhealthy dishes –** While it's difficult to mistake gravy for a healthy condiment, traditional sides like cranberry sauce and green bean casserole can masquerade as wholesome dishes. Unfortunately, these have far too much added sugar (2 tablespoons of cranberry sauce has around 15 grams of carbohydrate) or fat (the nutrients in the green beans are overshadowed by the butter, cream and oil) to be counted as healthy.You need to be careful with your fat and carbohydrate intake, even when you stick to white meat and steamed potatoes, so get a handle on what official protein and carbohydrate serving sizes look like before you join the feast. Carbohydrates can be particularly dangerous, so be cautious with bread, starch and dessert.

### Making Traditional Dishes Diabetes-friendly

You may need to cut back on Thanksgiving treats, but you can still enjoy the flavors of the season – especially if you take matters into your own hands. Whip up some of your own dishes with a few clever adjustments, and you can enjoy the meal without worrying too much about blood sugar levels:

- **Balance out your starches –** Potatoes are a must at any Thanksgiving dinner, but both the white and the sweet varieties are loaded with carbohydrates, and once the butter and cream is added, things get dicey.

Make your own healthier mashed potatoes by substituting half of the potatoes with turnip, celeriac or rutabaga: these all boil down to a soft and creamy texture, and can easily blend into a pot of potatoes to boost the flavor and reduce the starchy carbs.

- **Play up the roasted veggies –** Steamed vegetables may contain the least amount of fat, but they can also be a bit short on flavor. Try roasting up a tray of your favourite veggies with a dash of oil and a sprinkle of herbs and spices. A bit of coconut oil or olive oil goes a long way to sprucing up Brussels sprouts, and once you've tried the deep, rich flavor of roasted cauliflower, you'll have a difficult time going back to the steamed version.

- **Experiment with fruit –** Homemade cranberry sauce is far better for you than the sugar-laden, store-bought variety, but it can be pretty tart. Try mixing the juice of a fresh squeezed orange, some ginger and cloves, or a bit of stewed apple into your fresh cranberries. You'll still need to add a bit of sweetener and go easy on your portion, but you can bet that you'll get a load of nutrients, more fiber, and fewer simple carbohydrates when you make it yourself.
- **Tread carefully with dessert –** Dessert can be tricky to navigate, with all the sugar and fat, but you should still be able to have a bite of your favourite as long as you avoid any extra toppings, like whipped cream or liqueur).

The key to enjoying your day is balance: allowing yourself small indulgences can be morale-boosting, but you can't let your health fall by the wayside. Be sure to check your blood glucose levels before and after the meal, which will help you stay on top of your health throughout the Thanksgiving gathering.