4 Healthy Eating Tips for Diabetics

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Eating Tips for Diabetics

With the best will in the world, even the most dedicated healthy eaters can fall off the wagon sometimes. For those without diabetes it can be depressing and disappointing to realize junk food is taking over your diabetic diet but when you throw diabetes into the mix, a descent into unhealthy eating can prove life-threatening.

Every year has flashpoints when it's all too tempting to stop thinking about carbs and calories. It's okay to indulge occasionally but when a wedding feast merges into a birthday blowout then slides into seasonal snacking it can become increasingly difficult to keep control of your intake and blood glucose levels.

So what can you do to make sure that occasional treat doesn't turn into a lifelong habit?

Identify Your Weaknesses

For some, it's cake and for others alcoholic beverages. If your blood sugar statistics and the bathroom scales are starting to scare you, it's time to take a long, hard and totally honest look at your own life.

If you are genuinely baffled and can't figure out where those extra calories and carbs are coming from, start by writing down everything you eat or drink for two weeks. Write down when and where you were eating or drinking, who you were with and even if you were standing or sitting down.

Once you can identify the times and places you are most tempted you can adapt your routine to avoid them. For instance, if you find that you always stop for fast food on Thursdays when you have to pick up your kids from band practice, prepare healthy car snacks and vary your route so you won't be tempted.

Drink too much with one gang of friends? Offer to be the designated driver at least some of the time. They will be happy to save taxi fare and you will cut down at least some of your alcohol carbs (and possibly the pizza you can't resist when inebriated).

Eating Tips for Diabetics: How to Substitute Foods for Diabetic-Friendly Ones

A recent spell of hot weather saw me falling off my own wagon spectacularly. We went to countless BBQs where my friends always cooked far too much food and it seemed rude and wasteful not to indulge. Add in summer cocktails, iced treats and far too much chilled sparkling wine and it wasn't hard to identify where I was going wrong.

As the heatwave seemed to be unending I knew I had to tweak my diet and diabetic meal plan to survive my appointment with my diabetes nurse without being seriously told off.

Swap Out the Ice Cream With Homemade Ice Pops

Firstly I swapped chocolate coated ice-cream treats for homemade ice popsicles made with diluted cordials and fruit juices. A simple plastic mold kit cost just a few dollars and the children had lots of fun blending juices with water to create tasty and refreshing ice pops.

Obviously, those with diabetes need to be careful how many fruit juice based snacks they eat each day but my home-made ice pops were still healthier and cheaper and actually more refreshing than the shop-bought chocolate versions.

Skip the Grocery Bought Dip and Make Your Own

Attending barbecue parties I had been over-indulging in creamy dips with breadsticks and chips so I started taking my own home-made, dairy free, vegan low-fat, low carb dip created blending soy yogurt substitute with mint sauce, lemon juice, and powdered sweetener.

I added crudité – carrots, scallions, cucumber, peppers and more, and crunched away happily knowing I was getting a good dose of vitamins without too many carbs. Filling up on my dip also meant I was less likely to head back t the BBQ for seconds and thirds.

The dip is quite sweet so I also ate it in the evenings when my sweet tooth tends to be at its most rampant.

Host the Party Instead

Holding my own summer get-togethers I tried to avoid cooking the traditional high-fat, high-carb, high-calorie burgers and bangers with buns in favor of lightweight seasonal meals. We enjoyed griddled salmon with lemon couscous, Eastern style lamb with rice and toasted pine nuts and barbecue chicken with fresh crispy green salad and a drizzle of sweet chili sauce.

My favorite summer dessert this year has been fresh pineapple, cubed served with crushed meringue and a strawberry coulis made by simmering strawberries with a small amount of water and powdered sweetener. Take skewers and spear pineapple then dip your chunk into coulis then meringue.

Feels very indulgent and fun and gives you one of your daily servings of fruit while your sweet tooth is sated.

Cheers Without Tears

For many people, special occasions come with a side serving of alcohol. From toasting the happy couple at a wedding to saying cheers to a friend on their birthday it can be hard to feel part of boozy parties without a drink in hand.

This is where mixers can become your best friend. Add low-calorie lemonade, soda water or low cal tonic to white wine to make a spritzer which looks like champagne, or add lemonade to beer to make a shandy. These tricks will cut down your sugar and alcohol intake and no one needs to know.

Fancy a cocktail? Check out that menu carefully and skip over the pages featuring the creamy concoctions. Choose a long drink, sparkling blends and even frozen options which are still fun but far more diabetes-friendly.

With friends? Go for a sharer cocktail with lots of straws and make sure you just sip while they gulp. You'll still feel part of the party without risking soaring blood sugars.

The Conclusion

Just following these tips for one month helped me lose 7lbs. I was not actually officially overweight even with my hot weather gain but I feel happier and healthier having shaken off those extra pounds – just in time for the fall and winter holidays which bring their own temptations.