12 Holiday Survival Tips for Diabetics

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Surviving the Holidays With Diabetes

Candy, cookies, and eggnog, oh my! How will we ever get through the holidays with diabetes?

Normally the “I’ll have just one” philosophy will work just fine. However, during the holiday season, when the table is filled with a vast amount of treats, that doesn’t mean “just one of each.”

Let’s take a look at some ways to manage the holidays with diabetes while still keeping the sugars in check.

Holiday Eating With Diabetes Tips

During the holidays, our blood sugar levels go up and down thanks to all of the delicious sweets and treats around us. If you want to prevent your blood glucose levels from spiking and dropping, here are a few ways you can do so:

- **Water is your friend** – We are always telling you to get enough water each day. When you are attending a party, keep a water bottle handy. During the party, keep sipping that water to help stay full and ward off eating just to be sociable.
- **Switch it out** – Nearly every dip or cheeseball will taste just as good on a celery stick or cucumber slice as it would a chip or cracker. Besides, we all know the dip is the best part.
- **Treat yourself** – Yes, I said it. Leading a healthy lifestyle doesn’t mean you can’t indulge in some favorites now and then. Just make sure to keep it in moderation and choose the items you really want. If peanut butter fudge is your ideal memory of what the holidays are about, take some. Just don’t take it all of it or eat it all in one sitting.

Party Going Tips for Diabetics

The end of year celebrations is a perfect time for friends and loved ones to come together. If your calendar is full of parties to attend this holiday, here are a few ways to prepare for them and keep your diabetes in check:

- **Plan ahead** – If you know that you are going to be attending a celebration, be sure to eat properly both before and after the big event.
- **Eat before the event** – By having a snack or a meal before attending a party, you can make sure that you don’t arrive hungry. If you are already hungry, you will be much more likely to binge on high sugar items.
- **Bring a dish** – Make sure that you know there is at least one thing you can eat without guilt. Offer to bring a shareable. Pinterest has a plethora of cute ways to do veggie or cheese trays for the holidays. You could also offer to do a dessert with a favorite sugar-free jello or pudding recipe. Another idea is to take a favorite family recipe and swap out the unhealthy items for healthier, more diabetes-friendly choices.
- **Avoid the snack table** – “Out of sight, out of mind” really can help. Don’t stand around the food tables to socialize. If you get something to eat, step away from the food so you aren’t tempted to just stand there

and “graze” while chatting. If you’re not seeing and smelling it while it is within reach it makes it much easier to avoid the temptation.

Managing Diabetes During the Holidays

While the above tips can help out for special events, knowing that the months of November and December are going to be tough helps you to make a plan of attack going in. Here are some ideas:

- **Lessen the stress** – Consider planning some things that will help lower your stress level. Shop online and have the gifts arrive wrapped. Schedule a massage or a night out in that downtime. Look into a meal delivery plan for a few weeks. Order some holiday goodies from the local bakery instead of spending days slaving over sugar cookies and homemade fudge. (This will probably also help keep you from sampling while baking.)

- **Make time for additional exercise each week**– Yes, we already decided you are busy. But, if you save a little time choosing some tips from the paragraph above, you can loosen up a little time to get in an extra walk or morning yoga. The exercise will not only help keep your sugars down when you choose to indulge more than normal but it will also help alleviate stress.
- **Test your sugars more frequently** – Keeping on top of your sugars will not only serve as a reminder for you to keep watching what you eat but it will alert you ahead of time if you are headed down a dangerous pathway.
- **Drink more water** – This will help keep you hydrated if you are in a colder climate and the heat is on. It will also help keep you feeling more full when you are tempted to indulge.
- **Add vitamins** – Talk to your doctor about taking some extra vitamins or supplements during the winter months. They can suggest some things that might alleviate stress, help with sleeping and also help boost your immunity during the times when you are socializing a bit more than usual. Nothing can kill the holiday spirit more than a case of the flu.

The Bottom Line

The end of the year is full of tempting food celebrations. With a little pre-planning, a lot of willpower, and diabetes self management, you can get through it and still feel as though you’ve joined the celebration. Do you have any tips on surviving the holidays with diabetes? We’d love to hear about them.