

# TEACHING TOOL DOWNLOAD

## November

### ENJOYING THANKSGIVING WITH DIABETES



While you do need to have some awareness of your food choices when you have diabetes, it doesn't mean that you can't enjoy your favorite foods at Thanksgiving or other holidays. Holidays are often decorated with family recipes, which bring feelings of nostalgia. With some of the tips below and a plan of action, you can enjoy your Thanksgiving holiday while managing your diabetes.

**Load Up on Non-Starchy Vegetables** - Start by filling half your plate with vegetables, choosing non-starchy veggies when possible, such as leafy greens, carrots or green beans. Then, you can save your starches for your favorite carbohydrate-based dishes, like stuffing or mashed potatoes.

**Eat Breakfast in the Morning** - While there is a common idea that skipping breakfast on Thanksgiving morning will help you "save" your calories, this can actually work against you. First, it can send your blood sugar on a rollercoaster of ups and downs, and it can also lead to overeating later in the day. Instead, start with a balanced plate at breakfast with ample amounts of protein and fiber.

**Include Exercise** - Physical activity can help to balance blood sugar as well as enhance your overall mood. Consider taking a family walk after enjoying your meal, or designate some time for activity early in the day.



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**Be Mindful Of Your Snacking and Drinking** - While it can be habitual to snack all day, try to be mindful of what you're snacking on. Rather than nuts, chips and crackers, aim for veggies with low-fat dips or sauces, or low-fat cheeses. Make sure to drink adequate amounts of water, consider diluting your alcoholic mixed drinks with water or seltzer water, or make sure to drink water between alcoholic drinks.

**Choose Your Fats** - Pick out 1-2 non-negotiable foods that you look forward to. Then, consider some lower-fat substitutions for other options, such as white turkey meat without the skin for dark turkey meat, or mashed potatoes made with low-fat milk rather than whole milk and butter. Rather than sugar-rich canned cranberry sauce, opt for using fresh cranberries to make your own.

**Find Healthier Alternatives** - Round up some healthier alternatives to the typical high-fat and high-sugar Thanksgiving classics. Whether it's a crustless sweetpotato pie, a low-sugar cranberry sauce recipe or a green beans almondine dish instead of a green bean casserole, these options can help reduce the calories, fat and sugar content of your meal. You can also use less sugar and fat than the recipe calls for.

**Portion size** - Choose a smaller plate when decorating it with your Thanksgiving favorites. Doing so makes it less likely for you to mindlessly eat. You can always go up for seconds if you want more food! You'll likely have leftovers for days, so the food will be there if and when you want it.

Resources:

1. "Diabetes Superfoods." American Diabetes Association, 12 April 2020. <https://www.diabetes.org/nutrition/healthy-food-choices-made-easy/diabetes-superfoods>
2. McRae, M.P. (2018). Dietary Fiber Intake and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: An Umbrella Review of Meta-analyses. *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, 17(1):44-53. Doi: 10.1016/j.jcm.2017.11.00210.1016/j.jcm.2017.11.002



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