



Healthy Eating During Winter Gatherings for People with Diabetes

Winter is a season of holiday celebrations, football play-offs, and other occasions when family and friends get together over meals and snacks. For people with type 2 diabetes, it can be especially challenging to stick to a meal plan. Mouth-watering options such as honey-baked ham, buttery mashed potatoes, and sweet yams are popular for festive dinners, while chicken wings, cheesy nachos, and chips are among the favorites at football play-offs and other gatherings. However, you don't have to completely sacrifice all of your favorite foods. The key is to make a variety of healthy food choices and limit portion sizes.

Follow these tips from the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) to help you eat healthy during gatherings throughout the winter season:

- **Eat a healthy snack.** Eating a healthy snack prior to leaving home can prevent overeating at the party.
- **Plan ahead.** Check out the party food options before you begin eating, and make a mental note of what and how much you will eat. Your food choices should fit into your meal plan.
- **Bring a dish.** Share your healthy dish with family and friends.
- **Move away from the buffet.** Fix your plate, and then step away from a table of finger foods to avoid grazing while chatting.
- **Savor the flavor.** Eating slowly reduces your chances of overeating.
- **Drink H₂O.** Water is a healthy, no-calorie beverage. Drink plenty of it.
- **Trim it down.** Eat smaller portions of food. Trim off extra skin and fat from meat.
- **Party hard!** Focus on family, friends, and activities rather than food. Stay active by participating in games or dancing.

Follow these tips if your goal is to serve healthy feasts to your guests:

- **Bake it. Broil it. Grill it.** Consider healthy alternatives to traditional meats. Choose skinless meat or poultry and avoid fried dishes
- **Increase fiber.** Serve whole grain breads, peas, and beans as part of your meals.
- **Easy on the toppings.** Lighten your recipes by using reduced-fat or fat-free mayonnaise, butter, sour cream, or salad dressing.
- **Focus on fruits.** Serve fresh or canned fruits instead of ice cream, cake, or pie. Transform high fat, high-calorie desserts by replacing whole milk or whipped cream with 1 percent or nonfat milk.
- **Serve low-calorie beverages.** Offer your guests sparkling water or diet beverages.
- **We're all in this together.** Support your family and friends by encouraging them to eat healthy during the winter months and throughout the year.

To find out more information about the *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* campaign and to order free materials and resources, visit <http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org> or contact the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) at 1-888-693-NDEP (6337).