



Buffet Table Tips for People with Diabetes

The holidays represent a special time for gathering with family and friends. If you have diabetes, this two-month period can pose special challenges, because of the foods we eat to celebrate the holiday. How can you stick with your meal plan, yet join in the celebration and have some fun? You can do it. If you choose wisely and watch how much you eat, you can have a delicious meal and feel good too. So, grab your plate and head for the buffet table.

Look for the high fiber, low-fat dishes. Great choices are beans, dals and legumes like rajma, toor dal and moong dal, and dark green vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, and spinach. When it comes to salad, go for the green bean or three-bean dishes, tofu salad, Chinese chicken salad or pasta salads mixed with vegetables. Choose whole grain foods such as brown rice, bulgur, couscous, whole wheat bread, pasta or buckwheat noodles. Everyone benefits from eating these foods, not just people with diabetes. Grains like spelt and quinoa are high in fiber and hypoallergenic as well.

Watch out for dishes loaded with mayonnaise, sour cream and butter such as macaroni or egg salad and creamy dishes. Choose veggies that are light on salad dressing, cheese or cream sauce. If you can, make your own dressing with a little olive oil and vinegar. Also consider cooking with nonfat milk, yogurt and low fat cheese, instead of whole milk and heavy cream.

Vegetables and grains should fill up most of your plate. Choose small portions of lean meat, poultry or fish. Select grilled chicken without the skin and limit batter fried dishes.

Rather than choose dishes such as curries made with coconut milk, try choosing stir fried curries with brinjal, okra, karela, or moong bean sprouts. Instead of choosing bhajjias, vada, and channa dal, try choosing healthier items such as a lentil or vegetable with paneer dish.

What's for dessert? It's hard to beat fresh fruits such as berries, grapes, oranges, cantaloupe or watermelon. Fruit is an excellent source of fiber, vitamins and minerals, and has zero fat. Everyone, including people with diabetes, should eat three to four servings of fruit a day. Limit fried sweets like jamun, milk sweet, and halwas, and sugared fruits such as aam pappad and honeyed jackfruit. If you can't resist, have a small serving.

It's best to drink water, unsweetened tea or diet beverages. Add a wedge of lemon for flavor. Herb teas are good too, if available, choose water with a high mineral content. If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, limit your intake to no more than one drink a day for women, two for men, and drink only with a meal.

Eating the right foods to control your blood sugar means being prepared and planning ahead. If you need help putting together a meal plan, ask your doctor or nurse to refer you to a dietitian or diabetes educator. For more information about controlling your diabetes, call the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) at 510-272-9536 or the National Diabetes Education Program at 1-800-438-5383 or visit the program's web site at <http://ndep.nih.gov> on the Internet.

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