

# CHOOSING HEALTHY FOODS ON HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Tips for Chinese Americans with Diabetes

December 2015



Holidays, festivals, and celebrations are a time for gathering with family and friends for special meals. If you have diabetes, eating healthy at these times can be especially hard. Here are some tips to help you stick with your meal plan and celebrate!

## WHEN YOU GO



- **Plan ahead.** Before you go, think about the foods that will be at the celebration. Decide which foods can be a part of a delicious meal that will help keep your blood sugar under control and which foods you want to avoid.
- **Check out all that's offered at a buffet.** Before you serve yourself, look at all the options first, then choose one or two favorite treats along with healthier items to round out your meal.
- **Watch your portions.** Many of your favorite foods may have a lot of fat, sugar, or salt. Take very small portions of deep fried foods, fatty foods like roast duck or pork, or sweets like cakes, candied fruits, or sweet rice balls.
- **Come prepared.** Bring a low-fat main dish to a potluck so you'll have something healthy to eat.

## VEGETABLE TIPS



- **Fill half of a 10-inch plate** (the size of a regular dinner or paper plate) **with colorful, non-starchy vegetables**, such as Chinese broccoli, choy sum, Chinese celery, cucumber, long beans, carrots, eggplant, gourds, and Chinese spinach. Add mushrooms, seaweed, and black fungus for more variety.
- **Choose fresh vegetables that are steamed or lightly stir-fried** in vegetable oil or included in soup.
- Take only a little bit of the pickled vegetables; they have a lot of salt.



**National Diabetes Education Program**

A program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# GRAINS AND STARCHES

- Take only as much grain (like rice, congee, or noodles) or starchy vegetables to **fill ¼ of your plate**.
- **Choose high-fiber grains** like brown rice, whole wheat or buckwheat noodles, and whole wheat bread or corn buns.
- **Take small portions** of starchy vegetables, like taro or lotus root, pumpkin, chestnuts, beans, or corn.
- **Serve yourself plain steamed, boiled, or baked grains** (such as steamed buns, rice cakes, or dumplings) and try to stay away from fried rice, noodles, or dumplings.



# PROTEIN TIPS

- Eat 2–3 ounces of protein; enough to **fill ¼ of your plate**.
- **Pick dishes with lean meat or poultry**, like steamed chicken, pork tenderloin, or dishes with **fish or tofu**.
- Take just a taste of meats that are breaded, fried, or that have a lot of fat, like braised pork or beef, pork belly, and roasted duck.
- If you can, **trim the skin and fat off** any meat you eat.
- Watch out for foods that are covered in a sweet sauce (like orange chicken or sweet and sour dishes) or that are high in salt, such as salted fish, Chinese sausage, or dishes with a lot of soy sauce.



# SWEETS TIPS

- **Choose fresh fruits** such as pears, apples, oranges, pomelos, tangerines, or longan.
- Try not to eat (or have only a small serving of) foods that are high in sugar and/or fat, like cake, sweet buns or rice balls, glutinous rice cakes, candied fruits, or sweets made with coconut.



# DRINK TIPS

- **Drink water, unsweetened coffee or brewed tea, or other sugar-free beverages.** Add a lemon wedge to water for flavor.
- If you drink, limit alcoholic beverages to no more than one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men. Drink alcohol with food, not on an empty stomach.



**National Diabetes Education Program**  
For more information call 1-800 CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).  
TTY 1-(888) 232-6348 or visit [www.cdc.gov/info](http://www.cdc.gov/info).  
To order resources, visit [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep).

