

CHOOSING HEALTHY FOODS ON HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Tips for South Asian Americans with Diabetes

December 2015



Holidays 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 event. Decide which foods can be 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 foods like samosas, pakoras, and other fried appetizers; curries made with a lot of oil, ghee, or coconut milk; and desserts.
- **Come prepared.** Bring a low-fat appetizer or 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 spinach, eggplant, okra, carrots, green beans, bitter melon, tomatoes, or green salad.
- **Choose mostly salad or vegetable dishes** made with only a little oil. Use vinegar and lemon for a salad dressing.
- Take just a taste of deep-fried vegetables, dishes with starchy vegetables like potatoes or green peas, and those made with cream or a lot of oil.
- **Try yogurt raita, mint or coriander chutney, and kachumber**, instead of salty preserved pickle or chutney, or only take a small amount.

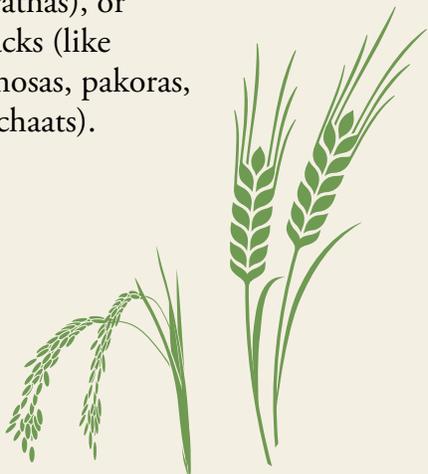


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GRAINS AND STARCHES

- Take only as much grain or starchy vegetables, such as rice, bread, potatoes, or green peas, to **fill ¼ of your plate**.
- **Choose high-fiber grains** like brown rice, cracked wheat, and whole grain breads like chapati or roti.
- **Serve yourself plain steamed or boiled rice or grains and baked breads** without ghee or butter.
- Try to stay away from or take a tiny serving of fried potatoes, rice dishes, breads (such as puris or parathas), or snacks (like samosas, pakoras, or chaats).



PROTEIN TIPS

- Eat 2–3 ounces of protein (lean meat, fish, dal, or tofu), enough to **fill ¼ of your plate**.
- **Pick** dishes with **baked or grilled lean meat or poultry** (like chicken without the skin or beef or goat with the fat cut off), **fish, or shrimp**.
- **Choose bean, lentil, or dal** dishes that are made **with just a little little oil or ghee**.
- Take just a taste of high-fat foods like meat or vegetable curries cooked with coconut milk, cream, ghee, or a lot of oil.



DESSERT TIPS

- **Choose fresh fruits** such as oranges, apples, or strawberries.
- Try not to eat (or have only a small serving of) desserts that are high in sugar and fat, like cookies, cakes, kulfi, halwa, kheer, rasmalai, gulab jamun, raasgulas, barfis, or other desserts in sugar syrup or made with cream or ghee.



DRINK TIPS

- **Drink water, unsweetened tea with skim or low-fat milk, 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.



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For more information call 1-800 CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).

TTY 1-(888) 232-6348 or visit www.cdc.gov/info.

To order resources, visit www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep.

