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SEASON'S EATINGS

Enjoy these
healthy
appetizers
again & again

ALSO

COLD & FLU
SKIN SMARTS
WINTER
WORKOUTS

WINTER 2015
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Winter 2015 CONTENTS



SEASON'S EATINGS

It's the most wonderful time of year—with the most temptations. Stay in control with our strategies and these delicious appetizers

*Cover: photography by Leigh Beisch;
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Prop Styling by Glenn Jenkins*



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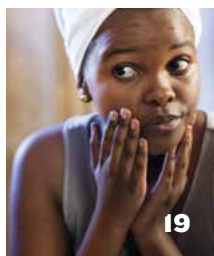
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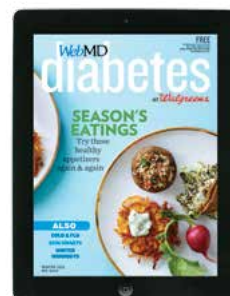
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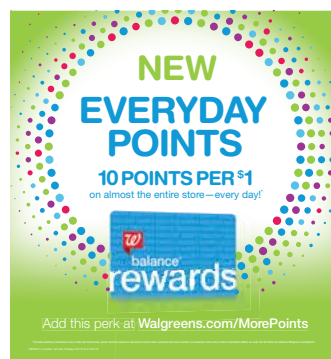
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Number of calories

a 50-year-old, 150-pound woman burns during 30 MINUTES OF SHOVELING SNOW. A 200-pound man the same age burns 276 calories.

Source: *HealthStatus*



RISE AND SHINE

When you eat breakfast, you could have better control over your blood sugar throughout the day. In a study, people with type 2 diabetes skipped breakfast one day and ate breakfast another day. Their lunches and dinners had the same number of calories on both days. On the day they skipped breakfast, the study participants had higher blood sugar levels after lunch and dinner than on the day they had three meals.

Source: *Diabetes Care*

14

GRAMS OF SUGAR

in an average candy cane. It also has 60 calories.

Source: *CalorieKing*



15

GRAMS OF SUGAR

in a cup of homemade hot cocoa with whole milk

Source: *USDA*

COLD CALL

Stress can make blood sugar soar—and also lead to mindless snacking. But why? Blame your brain. A recent experiment looked at a group of people trying to adopt healthy eating habits. Researchers had half of them dunk one hand in an ice bath for three minutes, which is proven to cause stress. Afterward, researchers tempted the whole group with junk food while observing their brains with an MRI scan. Those who had the ice bath were more likely to give in to temptation, and their brains showed lower function in the areas responsible for self-control.

Source: *Neuron*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DIGITAL VISION/GETTY IMAGES; DAWN POLAND/GETTY IMAGES; JAMES ACHARD/GETTY IMAGES; DORLING KINDERSLEY/GETTY IMAGES (2)



TEA TIME

Type 2 diabetes increases your risk for heart attack and stroke, but regularly drinking tea could lower that risk. Researchers believe the benefits come from a plant chemical in tea called flavonoids, which might reduce plaque buildup in the arteries. Some studies show that tea can improve the way your blood vessels respond to stress. It may also lower blood pressure and cholesterol. Stick to a cup or two a day for best results, and don't add too much sugar, experts say.

Source: Harvard Medical School

1
IN
3

Number of Americans
who **COULD HAVE**
DIABETES BY 2050
if present trends
continue

Source: American Diabetes
Association

GET A MOVE ON

The recommended 30 minutes of exercise, five days a week, sounds like a lot when you're starting from zero. But don't be afraid to start small, especially if you're older than 60. A recent study found that half as much exercise—15 minutes every weekday or 75 minutes a week—goes a long way. Researchers followed more than 120,000 adults ages 60 or older for about 10 years. Those who did moderate to vigorous exercise for just 75 minutes a week were 22% less likely to die during the 10-year period than those who didn't exercise at all.

Source: *British Journal of Sports Medicine*



176

Calories in a 4-ounce serving
of roasted skinless white turkey meat

Source: USDA



CLUB MED

The Mediterranean diet, rich in fish, vegetables, and whole grains, supposedly works wonders for your health. But what about for people with type 2 diabetes? Yes, say new nutrition guidelines from the American Diabetes Association. According to its updated recommendations on heart health for people with type 2 diabetes, those who follow the Mediterranean diet can reduce their risk of developing heart disease by 30%.

Source: American Diabetes Association

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What would happen if I stopped my diabetes care plan?

Can we review my eating plan?

Are some parts of my diabetes care routine more important than others? What should I prioritize?

Can you connect me with support groups or classes for people with diabetes?



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On the Rebound

How to overcome burnout right now

BY ERIN O'DONNELL

Let's be honest: The day-to-day routine of living with diabetes—testing your blood sugar, taking medications, counting carbohydrates—can wear a person out. Many people go through periods when they feel frustrated or defeated by the disease. They may even choose to ignore parts (or all) of their treatment plans, says Rita Panayiotou, RD, a certified diabetes educator and instructor at Grady Health System at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.

“Sometimes patients tell me, ‘I’m taking a vacation from my diabetes care,’” Panayiotou says. But a “vacation” from monitoring and managing the disease increases your risk of serious complications. Panayiotou offers these tips for avoiding diabetes burnout, or for getting back on track.

Check in with your team. Make (and keep) regular appointments with your doctor or diabetes educator, even if you are embarrassed. An appointment gives you an opportunity to troubleshoot problem areas. For example, Panayiotou often works with people who give up on their eating plans

because they feel confused about what they can and cannot eat. She outlines a simple eating plan and suggests ways to vary their meals to prevent boredom. She finds that these check-ins can be transformative for her patients.

Don't strive for perfection. While it's important to aim for blood sugar levels in your target range, accept that fluctuations happen, even when you try your best. “There's no such thing as perfect control,” Panayiotou says. “You can put someone in a room and give them the exact same meal every day, and you'll still see some variation due to things like stress or hormone levels.” You're less likely to feel frustrated if you accept that some of this is simply out of your control.

Focus on the victories. Take time to appreciate what you're doing right, even the small things, such as that walk you took after dinner last night or the apple you had with lunch, Panayiotou says. Then, set some gentle goals that build on those successes, like taking one more walk this week, keeping a food diary for seven days, or eating a fruit or vegetable with every meal.

REVIEWED BY AREFA CASSOOBHOY, MD, MPH, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR

Sick Day

How to handle a cold or flu—with diabetes

BY SONYA COLLINS

You're new to diabetes, but you feel you're keeping it under control. Then, bam! You get sick. Diabetes can be tricky when you're under the weather. But if you let blood glucose get out of whack, you'll feel worse.

If you come down with a cold, fever, or flu this winter, you'll be back on your feet sooner with these few simple guidelines.

Do I keep taking my medicine? “The biggest mistake people with diabetes make when they're sick is that they think they don't have to take their medicine because they're not eating as much,” says Elaine Sullivan, RN, a certified diabetes educator at Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston. It's true that eating less can lower your blood sugar. But lack of physical activity and sickness itself can raise it. So keep taking your meds while you're fighting off a cold or the flu.

What should I eat? It's best to continue your meals as usual. But if you can't eat much, try to get at least 45 to 50 grams of carbohydrate every three to four hours. Soup, soda crackers, popsicles, and gelatin might be easier to keep down than your usual staples.

What should I drink? Even a meager diet of soup and crackers might not prevent sick-day sugar spikes. Your body gets rid of extra sugar through your urine, and you can help the process along by drinking plenty of fluids. You could be pretty thirsty anyway: High blood sugar can dehydrate you.

Drink about 8 ounces of zero-calorie fluid every hour—unless you can't keep food down. “If you can't eat, have no-calorie beverages one hour, then carb-containing fluids the next,” Sullivan says. “That could be 8 ounces of juice or regular soda.”

Liquids that contain minerals—like broth or sports drinks—can help keep you hydrated.

REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD, WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR



Can I take cough or cold medicine?

Take sugar-free medicine if you can. Syrups are more likely than pills to have sugar. But if you need syrup to soothe your throat, go ahead. “The quantity of sugar you're getting from a tablespoon of cough medicine is not enough to really make a difference,” Sullivan says.

Some medicines, including aspirin, antibiotics, and decongestants, can raise or lower blood sugar even if they don't contain sugar. If you're unsure how to take these, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

How often should I check my blood sugar? You might not notice the symptoms of high blood sugar when you're sick, since you feel pretty crummy anyway, so check your blood sugar every two to four hours for the first couple of days.

“If your sugars seem pretty normal or they're running under 250, then you don't have to continue to do extra checking,” Sullivan says. If your blood sugar is 250 or higher for one reading, adjust your carbohydrate intake accordingly. Call your doctor if the spike continues for two or more readings.

HIGH ALERT

You can manage diabetes when you're sick. But call the doctor if you:

- Have two or more consecutive blood sugar readings of 250 or higher
- Have uncontrollable nausea or diarrhea
- Are vomiting
- Can't keep fluids down
- Have a fever for more than 24 hours
- Have abdominal pain
- Don't feel confident taking care of yourself



Read *Managing Diabetes When You're Sick*, a blog post at WebMD.com.

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Snack Break

Stabilize your blood sugar with these quick bites

BY ANNA PANZARELLA, RDN

Do you stick to three healthy meals per day but still have a hard time stabilizing your glucose numbers? You might try eating more frequently. It may seem counterintuitive, but inconsistent eating habits or going without food for several hours between meals can make stabilizing blood glucose difficult. Snacking between meals can help you avoid major peaks and valleys in blood sugar levels and even make you less likely to overeat at mealtimes.

Ideally, your snack should pair a high-fiber carbohydrate with a bit of protein. Need some examples? Take a look at these pairings that are easy to prepare and perfect for an on-the-go snack:

Veggies and hummus A dip traditionally made of chickpeas, olive oil, and sesame seed paste (tahini), hummus is rich in heart-healthy fats, protein, and complex carbohydrates. Pair a couple tablespoons of this Mediterranean favorite with crunchy, high-fiber veggies like cucumbers, carrots, or celery for a tasty midday snack.

Greek yogurt and fresh fruit Yogurt with fruit is a great way to kick a sweets craving without sending your blood sugar through the roof. Due to its unique straining process, Greek yogurt tends to be higher in protein and gut-healthy bacteria than other yogurt varieties. Unfortunately, many Greek yogurts on the market are sweetened with syrups or sugar-laden preserves. Avoid an unnecessary sugar rush by opting for plain yogurt and sweetening it yourself with a handful of fresh fruit.

Apples and nut butter Apples (with the skin left on) are a good source of fiber. Pair your favorite variety with a couple tablespoons of natural nut or seed butter, and you have a



terrific energy-boosting snack. Avoid any nut butter with a lengthy ingredient list—it may contain added sugars or oils that are not heart-healthy. The ingredients should be as simple as possible—just nuts or seeds and salt.

Tuna fish and whole grain crackers Canned tuna is an inexpensive way to get in a dose of protein with the added benefits of omega-3 fatty acids. Lighten up traditional tuna salad by replacing calorie-dense mayo with plain Greek yogurt, or squeeze fresh lemon juice on your tuna and add freshly cracked pepper. Serve on high-fiber, whole grain crackers for a good mix of complex carbs, healthy fats, and satiating protein.

Homemade energy bars Protein bars and energy bars seem to be all the rage these days. But buyer beware: Many seemingly healthy bars rack up as many grams of added sugar as a typical candy bar or have long lists of processed ingredients. Make your own bars by mixing a selection of fiber-rich nuts, dried fruits, or oats. Look for recipes for homemade bars that don't contain added thickeners, sweeteners, or processed protein powders.

Adding one to three healthy snacks per day is a great way to help keep your blood sugar levels stable and stave off hunger.

ASK YOUR DIABETES DIETITIAN

Can you help me create a list of healthy snacks that include my favorite foods?

What about portion size? What's a healthy size for a snack?

How often can I add snacks to my daily meal plan?

Which snack foods should I avoid entirely?

What should I look for on food labels?



Check out [Healthy Snacks on the Go](#), a slideshow at [WebMD.com](#).

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Holiday temptations are everywhere. Stay in control with expert strategies and our delicious and satisfying appetizers

SEASON'S EATINGS

'Tis the season for socializing! Beyond the major holidays, your calendar is likely packed with office parties, neighborhood open houses, and family get-togethers...and your regular eating schedule is apt to get thrown out of whack. But with these tips—and some new veggie-based appetizer recipes to try out—you can navigate the holiday season in good health.

BY KERRI-ANN JENNINGS

REVIEWED BY HANSA BHARGAVA, MD, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEIGH BEISCH

FOOD STYLING BY DAN BECKER, PROP STYLING BY GLENN JENKINS





Mini Curried Butternut Squash Latkes

These Indian-spiced latkes swap classic white potatoes for nonstarchy winter squash, a move that saves carbs and calories while giving an appealing saffron splash of color to the appetizer tray. They're great on their own or topped with a dollop of store-bought raita.

Makes 8 servings (2 dozen mini latkes)

INGREDIENTS

18 oz butternut squash, peeled and cubed
1 small yellow onion, peeled and quartered
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
2 tbsp flour or matzoh meal
1 heaping tsp curry powder
1 heaping tsp coriander seeds, crushed with a mortar and pestle
½ tsp kosher salt
2 tbsp canola oil

DIRECTIONS

1. In a food processor fitted with grater attachment, grate squash and onion. Transfer to large bowl. Add eggs, flour or matzoh meal, spices, and salt and stir.
2. Add 1 tbsp canola oil to a large nonstick pan and heat over medium heat. Drop mixture by heaping forkful into pan and cook until golden on each side—about 3 minutes per side. Add more oil between batches.

PER SERVING (about 3 mini latkes)
89 calories, 3 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 47 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 168 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 49%

PLAN AHEAD

Keep eating regular meals and snacks throughout the day, so that you come to a holiday party or meal moderately hungry but not starving. That serves two purposes, says Mindy Haar, PhD, RD, director of the clinical nutrition program at New York Institute of Technology. Physiologically, it helps because you're not starving and willing to eat anything and everything on the table. Psychologically, you won't think, "I saved all day—I can have whatever I want."

COME PREPARED

Offer to make a veggie-forward side or appetizer, such as the ones on these pages. "As a hostess, I love when someone brings a salad or offers to help by bringing an extra veggie side dish," Haar says.



Stuffed Mushrooms

This crowd-pleaser offers savory umami flavor, and it's super low in carbs—and calories.

Makes 12 servings

INGREDIENTS

24 large white mushrooms with stems attached
1 tbsp olive oil
2 pinches kosher salt
½ cup red pepper, minced
½ cup low- or no-sodium chicken stock (or water, sherry, or white wine)
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
¼ cup whole wheat panko breadcrumbs
½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
freshly ground pepper, to taste
2 tbsp chopped fresh basil (and/or parsley)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Wash mushrooms. Gently remove stems from caps, taking care not to break caps. Finely chop stems and set aside. Toss caps with olive oil and a pinch of kosher salt and transfer to foil-lined, rimmed cookie sheet.
3. Coat large nonstick pan with cooking spray and heat over medium heat. Add chopped mushroom stems, red pepper, and a splash of chicken stock and cook until mushrooms begin to soften and turn golden. Add garlic. Cook 1 minute until garlic becomes fragrant. Add breadcrumbs and remaining chicken stock—add more, if needed to make breading moist. Turn off heat. Add most of cheese, reserving some to sprinkle on top. Add salt and pepper to taste and mix in basil.
4. Fill each mushroom cap with a tablespoon of stuffing mixture. Sprinkle reserved cheese on top. Bake until mushrooms are soft when pierced with a fork and filling is golden brown, about 25 minutes.

PER SERVING (2 mushrooms)
38 calories, 3 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 2 mg cholesterol, 1 g fiber, 1 g sugar, 163 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 52%

BE ADVENTUROUS

"Think of the holidays as a more adventurous time for food choices, but don't let your vigilance slide for whatever you need to moderate," Haar recommends.

SIT AND SAVOR

Turn any eating event into a sit-down meal. After you fill your plate, go away from the buffet table and sit and enjoy your food and the company you're with. "If you stand by the table, you'll tend to overeat lots of calories," says Lezlie Sparks, MS, RDN, LD, a certified diabetes educator at The Medical Center of Plano in Texas.

Kale-Artichoke Dip

This lightened-up take on classic spinach-artichoke dip is flavorful and filling, thanks to fiber-rich artichoke hearts. Serve with whole wheat pita chips.

Makes 9 servings

MAKE A MEMORY

"We enjoy eating food, but a meal only lasts 20 to 30 minutes," Sparks says. "The memory of the food lasts a lifetime. It only takes two or three bites to make the same memory as 20 bites." For your favorite holiday foods, you can get the same satisfaction from a sample as from a hefty serving.

KEEP UP SELF-CHECKS

You might be tempted to skip some glucose self-checks. But when you stray from your eating routine, it's more important than ever to check your blood sugar regularly. You might even be surprised, Haar says. "If your number is still OK and you ate more than usual, great. You just want to be in the desirable range."

INGREDIENTS

12 oz frozen artichoke hearts, thawed
10 oz frozen kale, thawed
4 oz light cream cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
1 tbsp minced garlic
¼ tsp salt
½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat an 8-inch square pan with nonstick spray.
2. Place artichokes in food processor fitted with blade and pulse a few times. Add kale, cream cheese, Parmesan, yogurt, garlic, and salt, and pulse until blended.
3. Transfer to prepared pan and spread. Sprinkle with mozzarella. Place in oven and bake until golden brown and bubbling, about 30 minutes.

PER SERVING

104 calories, 7 g protein, 9 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 16 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 284 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 43%



Check out The
Healthy Recipe
Finder at
WebMD.com.

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FITNESS FACTS

Exercise helps lower your blood glucose.

Staying active burns calories. That can offset extra helpings of holiday foods.

Exercise boosts your energy, improves your mood, and helps relieve holiday stress.

Working out gives you a chance to socialize with friends or make a new one. Schedule time to exercise with someone else—you're more likely to keep the appointment if a friend is waiting for you.



Check out [The 7-Minute Workout](#), a slideshow at [WebMD.com](#).

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Seasonal Help

How to stick to your workout plan any time of year

BY KARA MAYER ROBINSON

Yes, it's easy to slip out of your fitness routine during the holidays. But staying active is key for managing diabetes. Regular exercise can lower your blood sugar levels and improve your insulin sensitivity, says Erin Palinski-Wade, RD, certified diabetes educator and personal trainer. To stick with your exercise program, try these tips.

Shop and go. Spending hours at the mall? Do double duty with short bursts of exercise. "Take the stairs instead of the elevator, briskly walk from store to store, or perform arm curls with your shopping bags," Palinski-Wade says. Wear a pedometer and give yourself a step-count goal for the trip.

Plan food-free celebrations. "Don't make food the focus at holiday events," Palinski-Wade says. Opt for celebrations that shift the focus away from food and get you moving. Instead of a dinner with all the trimmings, celebrate the holidays with a recreational event like sledding or snowshoeing. Or balance your meal with something healthy. If your family normally gathers for an eating extravaganza, carve out time before or after to take a walk together.

Take it outside. Let the holidays inspire your activity. Love holiday lights? Go for a walk in a neighborhood filled with lights and decorations. Take a hike on snow-covered terrain. Try cross-country skiing. Listen to holiday music as you skate around a local ice rink. "Don't let the cold weather stop you," Palinski-Wade says.

Pencil it in. Make an appointment to exercise every day and mark it in your



calendar, then schedule your holiday shopping or social events around your workout. When exercise is written as a firm commitment, you'll be less likely to push it off.

Try something new. The holidays are anything but routine. Let your exercise program follow suit. Instead of sticking with your usual activities, mix it up. When you're out shopping for everyone else, pick up a fitness DVD for yourself. Download a workout app on your smartphone. Try yoga or tai chi. A new activity can challenge your body and boost your motivation.

Take a pass on perfection. If you don't have time for a full workout, don't bail on exercise altogether. Simply do what you can. Maybe it's the first 10 minutes of your normal routine. Maybe it's a short walk.

Step into the season. Make walking your main activity. Invest in a simple, low-cost pedometer and try to rack up as many steps as possible, Palinski-Wade says. Aim for 10,000 steps per day. With all the holiday shopping and social events, you may be surprised how quickly you hit your target.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL W. SMITH, MD, CPT, WEBMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR

ANDREW RICH/GETTY IMAGES

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What adjustments should I make if my main meal isn't at my usual dinnertime?

What should I do if I overindulge?

How often should I check my glucose if I'm drinking alcohol?

How should I manage my blood sugar during a long car ride or flight?

What should I do if I get sick during the holidays?



Read [How I Get Back on Track](#), a blog post at WebMD.com.

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Survival Guide

How to savor the holiday season

BY MICHELE COHEN MARILL

What's the best way to manage type 1 diabetes during the holiday frenzy? Slow down. Give yourself plenty of time to get your errands done. Savor each bite and sip your drinks. Eat the foods that make your holidays special, but be aware of what and how much you eat so you can adjust your insulin.

While changes from the usual routine create a challenge for glucose control, feeling anxious just makes matters worse. "Any time you're under stress, the body is going to make these stress hormones that fight insulin," says George Grunberger, MD, chair of Grunberger Diabetes Institute in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., and president of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.

Instead, use these strategies to make your holiday season as healthy and enjoyable as possible.

Easy does it. That mantra applies both to what you eat and drink and to how you approach glucose control. Consider all your food choices before selecting the ones you really want, suggests Tami Ross, RD, LD, a diabetes educator from Lexington, Ky., and author of nine books on diabetes and diet. "It is all about moderation," she says.

If you see that your blood sugar is rising or falling, don't overreact, Grunberger cautions. You need to respond, but be aware that the extra glucose or insulin will take some time to have full effect.

Know your numbers. Mobile apps provide carbohydrate counts for common holiday foods, enabling you to adjust your insulin. Check your glucose often, especially if you drink alcohol. The American Diabetes Association recommends a limit of one



drink per day for women and two for men; one drink is defined as 5 ounces of wine or champagne, 12 ounces of beer, or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits. Alcohol can lower your blood sugar, so you should have it with food. If you have several drinks at a party, check your blood sugar before you go to bed and even set an alarm to check it later in the night, Ross says.

Consider the weather. Being out in the cold lowers your blood flow, which means insulin acts more slowly. If you spend the holidays in the tropics, the heat will speed up your insulin response, Grunberger says. In any case, keep your insulin and supplies safe from temperature extremes. Don't leave them in the trunk of the car or in checked luggage, which is exposed to temperature changes in a plane's cargo hold.

Keep moving. As much as you may love to lounge on the sofa and watch football, you need some forward motion of your own. Don't sit more than 90 minutes at a time or go more than two days without moderate exercise, such as brisk walking, the American Diabetes Association advises.

REVIEWED BY AREFA CASSOOBHOY, MD, MPH, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR

On the Surface

How to prevent, spot, and treat skin conditions

BY BRENDA CONAWAY

PROTECT YOURSELF

What's the best way to fight infections that cause skin problems?

Check your feet and any areas of your body that get damp and sweaty every day.

Use moisturizer on dry skin daily to prevent cracking and itching.

If you think you have an infection anywhere on your body, call your doctor.

Don't try to treat skin infections at home with over-the-counter products—they may not be strong enough.



Watch *Skin Care for Diabetes*, a video at WebMD.com.

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Diabetes gives you a good reason to pamper your skin. With diabetes, you're more prone to skin problems such as dryness. And because diabetes raises your chances of infection, even a minor skin condition can become a more serious problem. This guide will fill you in on common skin conditions linked to diabetes, how to prevent them, and how to care for yourself if you do get them.

Diabetic dermopathy This appears as light brown, scaly, round spots on the shins. They look a lot like age spots but are caused by changes in your small blood vessels. "It's more of a cosmetic issue and doesn't really require treatment," says Margo S. Hudson, MD, an instructor at Harvard Medical School.

Disseminated granuloma annulare This condition causes red, red-brown, or skin-colored raised rings or arcs on the skin. They're likely to show up on your fingers, ears, or lower legs, but can also appear on the trunk of your body. Your doctor can prescribe a cortisone skin cream or another treatment.

Digital sclerosis About one-third of people with type 1 diabetes have this

condition. It can make the skin on the back of your hands thick, waxy, and tight. Your finger joints may become stiff and hard to move. You can also get it on your forehead and toes and, more rarely, your elbows, knees, or ankles. To treat it, get your blood sugar under control.

Acanthosis nigricans With this condition, the skin on your neck, armpits, or groin thickens and becomes brown or tan. "People think it's dirt and wonder why they can't clean it off," Hudson says. Insulin resistance causes acanthosis nigricans, and it's most likely if you are overweight. Treatment includes losing weight and taking diabetes drugs, which help the body better use insulin.

Eruptive xanthomatosis Young men with type 1 diabetes who also have high levels of cholesterol and fat in their blood often get this condition. It causes raised, yellow, pea-sized bumps that have a red halo and may itch. They appear on the hands, arms, feet, legs, and buttocks. Getting your blood sugar levels under control clears them up.

REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD, WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR

Do You Make Good Food Choices?



Holiday buffets are notorious diet wreckers. And when you have diabetes, a table piled with high-carb, high-fat treats is a blood-sugar disaster waiting to happen. WebMD diabetes community member **max9821** avoids weight gain and sugar swings by planning ahead and brown-bagging meals. “I make sure I have enough of my own stuff so I am never tempted to indulge in any of the other food.” The method seems to work. “Didn’t gain an ounce and maintained fasting sugars in the low 80s,” max9821 wrote after one holiday family gathering. You don’t have to avoid the buffet this season—just make better choices. Take this quiz to see how well you navigate holiday party foods.

QUIZ

1. Salad is a healthy buffet choice, but which of these dressings is lightest?
 - a. Russian
 - b. Italian
 - c. Caesar
2. To visualize the right portion size, which object should you use?
 - a. A medium-sized dinner plate
 - b. Your head
 - c. Your fist
3. Which of these appetizer choices is healthiest?
 - a. Carrots with hummus
 - b. Pretzels
 - c. Guacamole and chips
4. If you choose to have alcohol, which drink is best?
 - a. Margarita
 - b. White wine spritzer
 - c. Vodka and cola

ANSWERS: 1. b. Italian dressing is the best of the three options, with just over 70 calories per 2-tablespoon serving (Russian dressing has 106 calories and Caesar has more than 160). Even better, choose a low-fat or fat-free dressing. No matter which salad topping you pick, don’t ladle it on. Serve dressing on the side and dip your fork first in the dressing, then the salad. You’ll save nearly 100 calories. 2. c. Each of your fists is about the size of 1 cup of food. Two cups is a good portion size for adults. One cup should be nonstarchy vegetables (green beans, broccoli, mushrooms). Divide the remaining cup between whole grains and lean protein (skinless chicken breast, fish, tofu). 3. a. Carrots and hummus are nutrient-dense—high in vitamins, but low in calories and fat. Pretzels are also low-calorie, but they’re low in nutrition, too. They won’t fill you up, so you’ll be more likely to hit the buffet table for refills. Avocados are good for you, but guacamole can be high in calories, and the tortilla chips that come with it are usually fried. 4. b. Alcohol doesn’t have to be off-limits as long as your doctor says it’s OK for you to drink. But imbibe in moderation—no more than one drink for women, one or two for men. To cut the sugar and calories in wine or spirits, add a spritz of seltzer.

SOURCES:

USDA, CDC, Joslin Diabetes Center, WebMD Diabetes Health Center

REVIEWED BY HANSA BHARGAVA, MD, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Can you recommend a dietitian to help me plan holiday meals?

Can I eat sweets?

Can I drink alcohol?

Do I need to count carbohydrates? How do I do it?

If I overindulge and my blood sugar spikes, how can I lower it?



Check out **Diabetes-Friendly Drinks and Cocktails**, a slideshow at WebMD.com.

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DON'T DO IT

Get all of your information online.

When looking online, stick with credible sites with evidence-based research to back up claims.

Jump on a bandwagon diet.

For those with diabetes, extreme diets to lose weight or manage blood sugars can be dangerous, particularly when they cut out entire nutrient groups like carbohydrates.

Bite off more than you can chew.

Avoid committing to too many changes at once. Take it slow so you don't resort to bad habits.



Take **Test Your Type 2 IQ**, a quiz at WebMD.com.

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New Day

Learn how to live a healthy life with diabetes

BY ANNA PANZARELLA, RDN

Learning that you have diabetes can be overwhelming. If you recently found out you have diabetes, these dos will help you get a handle on caring for yourself.

Get informed on the basics.

Attempting to jump-start your diabetes management plan before you understand your condition is like jumping into a swimming pool before learning how to swim. You need to have a firm grasp on what causes diabetes, what measures should be taken to manage it, and what can help to prevent associated risks. Ask your doctor for a thorough overview of your condition or schedule some one-on-one time with a certified diabetes educator.

Learn what affects blood sugar.

Most people know that food and physical activity play a role in diabetes management, but did you know that things like caffeine and stress can also influence blood sugar? Learn what factors may affect your blood glucose values by

keeping a journal or log that tracks blood sugar readings. Note what you ate, when you exercised, how stressed you were that day, and so on. Use these to spot patterns. Do you notice a blood sugar surge in the mornings? Do you see a large spike at night after your evening snack? Do you eat at consistent times during the day or go long hours between meals? These details can help you better tailor your diabetes management plan without continual trial and error.

Seek support. Several studies show that some kind of support system, whether family, friends, a health coach, or a behavioral health counselor, can drastically improve diabetes management. Ask your doctor or diabetes educator about local support groups where you can find peers who may be able to relate to what you are going through. Or seek a mental health professional who can help you sort through the many emotions you may feel since your diagnosis.

REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD, WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR

Stress Less

Learn how your worries can affect blood sugar

BY GINA SHAW



The holidays are right around the corner—and they often come with a heaping helping of stress. That extra stress can seriously affect blood sugars, experts say, in at least two significant ways.

Hormonal changes Stress wreaks havoc on your hormones, and the release of stress-related hormones like cortisol can lead to spikes in blood sugar levels. That's true whether or not you have diabetes, but for people with the disease, getting blood sugar back under control is much harder.

To see how stress affects your own blood sugar, try this experiment: Pick an upcoming situation that could prove stressful in the short term. Maybe it's a job interview, or a public-speaking commitment. Check your blood glucose a few hours before the event, then right before the event, and then again immediately after. "This can give you a ballpark idea about your own personal response to stress," says John Zrebiec, LICSW, director of behavioral health at Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston.

Taking care of yourself—or not "Diabetes is largely about self-care: meal planning, exercise, taking your medications

on time, keeping track of your blood glucose," says Susan Guzman, PhD, director of clinical and educational services and co-founder of the Behavioral Diabetes Institute in San Diego.

"When there's a lot going on in your life, you're more likely to grab comfort foods. You're less likely to count carbs and make sure you're taking the proper insulin dose," Guzman says. "Of course, things like not eating right or not getting enough sleep affect everyone under stress, but when you have diabetes, the cost of making these mistakes is higher."

So how can you get a handle on stress and keep your diabetes care in check?

Know yourself. Understand what your stress signals are. Do you feel panicky and anxious? Depressed and overwhelmed? Cranky and irritable? Do you overeat?

Breathe. Taking deep, slow breaths from your diaphragm tells your brain to send oxygen to your muscles, helping you relax.

Set yourself up for success. Set an alarm on your computer or phone to remind yourself to get up and take a short walk every hour. Stash healthy snacks and your blood glucose meter in a handy desk drawer, and keep any holiday treats far away, Guzman says.

IN THE NO

Feeling stressed this holiday season? Consider these tips from John Zrebiec, LICSW.

Rather than accept every holiday invitation, practice diplomatically and politely saying no.

Let go of your expectations that you have to do everything, and do it perfectly, this holiday season.

Set limits. Plan for what you can do, and say no to what you can't. Then, when unpredictable things do happen—and they will—you won't be too worn down to handle them.



Check out [10 Ways to Stop Stress](#), a slideshow at WebMD.com.

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Q
How
does type 2
diabetes affect
memory?



Elizabeth Seaquist, MD
professor of medicine,
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Medical School's
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Endocrinology and
Metabolism

A

Studies show that people with type 2 diabetes are at increased risk for Alzheimer's disease. They're also more likely to get vascular dementia—memory loss caused by blood vessel damage and poor blood flow to the brain. And, they're at greater risk for mild cognitive impairment, memory problems that can sometimes lead to Alzheimer's disease. Yet we don't know exactly why people with diabetes are more likely to develop memory loss.

We do know that diabetes damages blood vessels and increases the risk for stroke, which can make you more likely to get vascular dementia. The connection might also have to do with insulin resistance. In people with diabetes, the body doesn't respond well to the hormone insulin, which normally moves sugar from the bloodstream into the cells. Some scientists believe that people with diabetes may also have insulin resistance in their brain. We need insulin to keep our brain cells healthy, and insulin resistance could damage brain cells enough to cause memory loss. In fact, researchers are investigating whether an insulin nasal spray might help ward off dementia.

If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control to protect your blood vessels and prevent complications like nerve damage, kidney disease, and vision loss. Yet you don't want to overcorrect. Very low blood sugar can also harm your memory and mental function. Work with your doctor to keep your blood sugar within a healthy range.

You also want to stay on top of your cardiovascular disease risks, because heart and blood vessel problems can contribute to memory loss. Watch your blood pressure and make sure your cholesterol is well controlled.

And stay active. I'm a big believer that exercise is good for your health in general, and some studies of people who are at risk for Alzheimer's show that it can slow progression of the disease. Aim for at least 30 minutes a day of walking or other moderate-intensity exercise.

Finally, keep your body lean. I ask my overweight patients with type 2 diabetes to lose the excess weight and keep it off. Some studies show that obesity in middle age puts people at risk for memory loss later in life. Losing just 5% to 10% of your body weight can prevent diabetes, control your cardiovascular risk factors, and potentially preserve your memory. Losing weight through exercise and by eating balanced meals is one realistic step you can take to improve your brain function as you age.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL W. SMITH, MD, WEBMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR



Check out **Brain Foods That Help You Concentrate**, a slideshow at WebMD.com.

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New Focus

A man who lost his vision now helps others

BY THOMAS TOBIN, WEBMD.COM COMMUNITY MEMBER



I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when I was 9 years old—42 years ago—and back then we didn't have many tools to manage the disease. It was basically take your one shot of insulin per day and hope for the best. And that was pretty much how I managed diabetes.

I was a sophomore in college when home blood glucose meters came out. And of course at age 18, I didn't think very much about it because you think you're invincible. I was a varsity athlete in tip-top shape and being monitored by my doctor, but I wasn't using the blood sugar meter.

Just after soccer season in my junior year, I began to notice subtle changes in my vision. Things just weren't as crisp and clear as they used to be.

I came back home and that's when my doctor found I had proliferative diabetic retinopathy, which is a fancy

THOMAS' TALE

"Diabetes is a serious chronic disease, but if you use the tools that are out there, you can live a full, productive, and happy life."

"Giving back is pretty important to me. It defines who I am."

"I still live like everyone else. I just can't see."

way of saying I had a bunch of abnormal blood vessels that had grown all over the back of my eye that weren't supposed to be there. They have a tendency to leak and hemorrhage.

Thus began a six-month tour of driving back and forth to college and home where I'd have laser treatments,

which initially did a pretty good job of slowing down the retinopathy.

I went to bed after typing my final paper of the semester, and I woke up the next day and couldn't see out of my left eye. I packed up my car, drove back home, put the car in park, and turned off the ignition, and that was the last time I ever drove a car.

The next day I saw the retina specialist, who confirmed that the retina in my left eye had detached. It was basically like turning off the lights. My right retina was in pretty bad shape, too. When the retina in my right eye finally detached, I was totally blind. I had several more surgeries, but my vision never came back. I'll never forget when my doctor said, "Tom, there's nothing more medically I can do for you."

From my diagnosis to that point was one calendar year.

I had no idea what my future was going to be about. But I enrolled in a sight center where you learn new skills needed for daily life—like cooking, cutting vegetables, doing laundry, getting around. I learned to read and write Braille. I was very motivated that nobody was going to take care of me.

When I was done with the rehab, I went back to college, the only blind student there. I finished my degree and returned as a volunteer to the sight center, and then was hired as a development officer. Now I'm a development consultant working for the blindness community. I feel blessed today. I live an incredibly fulfilling and independent life, giving back to society.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL W. SMITH, MD, WEBMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR

ROGER MASTROIANNI