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twist to your
holiday feast

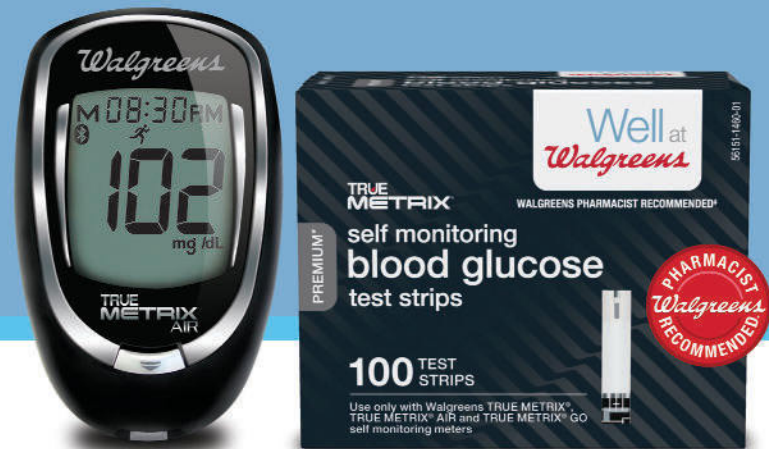
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* Walgreens Pharmacist Survey, November 2014

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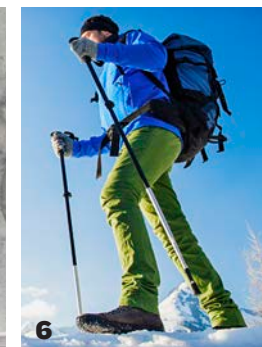
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➔ **Plus:** Look for this icon to get more information at WebMD.com.

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UP TO **34%**

Percentage of people with diabetes who will have a foot ulcer in their life. Check your feet for sores every day.

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*



UNDER CONTROL

You can control your diabetes. In a study of 19,600 adults with type 2 diabetes, researchers figured out exactly what it takes. When they analyzed the habits of people in the study, they found that those whose blood sugar was at goal level took their medication at least 80% of the time and exercised for 30 minutes at least four times a week.

Source: *American Journal of Pharmacy Benefits*

477
CALORIES

a 150-pound woman burns in an hour of ice skating.

Source: USDA



BLOOD SUGAR SUPERFOOD

Need another reason to eat your broccoli? It could help control your blood sugar. When people with type 2 diabetes took 26 mg of broccoli sprout extract daily for a month, it lowered their fasting blood sugar. What's more, when researchers applied the extract to liver cells in a petri dish, it hindered their ability to produce sugar. The researchers believe that a chemical compound in broccoli called sulforaphane could be the reason for its anti-diabetic effects.

Source: *Science Translational Medicine*



VEGETARIAN DIET PERKS

With so many diets out there, which one is best? A vegetarian diet might be. Researchers assigned 74 adults with type 2 diabetes to a low-calorie vegetarian diet or a standard low-calorie diet recommended for diabetes. In six months, the vegetarians lost more body fat, achieved better blood sugar control, and became more responsive to insulin—the compound produced by the pancreas that lowers blood sugar levels. The vegetarians got 60% of their calories from carbohydrates, 15% from protein, and 25% from fat. The only animal products allowed were one cup of low-fat yogurt per day.

Source: *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*

205 CALORIES

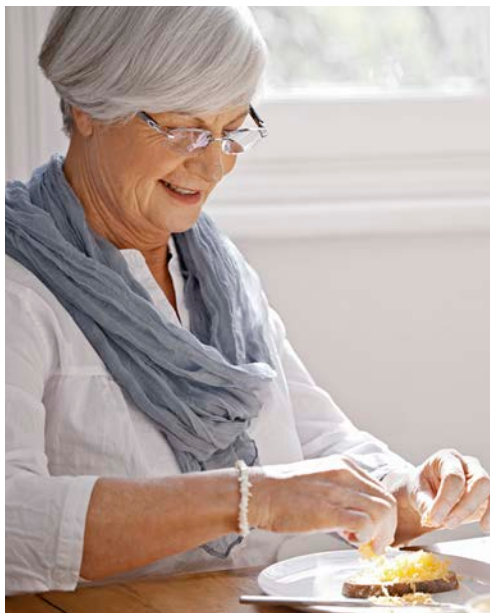
a 150-pound
woman burns in
half an hour of
shoveling snow.

Source: USDA

6.8%

Percentage of people in Colorado who
have diabetes, the lowest rate in the nation.
Mississippi has the highest at 14.7%.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



EARLY EATERS

Want to make your meal plan work better for you? Try timing your meals earlier in the day. In an experiment, when adults consumed all their calories for the day—three meals and two snacks—between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., they saw better results than when they ate the

same amount between noon and 11 p.m. Late eaters gained weight and saw increases in their cholesterol and insulin secretion—an indicator of increased blood sugar. Those in the study saw the effects of their new meal schedules in just two months.

Source: University of Pennsylvania

Winter Walks

How to keep walking—safely and comfortably—all season long

BY KARA MAYER ROBINSON

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Work with your doctor to create a personalized winter walking plan. Start by asking these questions:

With my medical history, do I need to take special precautions?

How will walking in the cold impact glucose levels—and what should I look out for?

If I'm not walking regularly now, is it safe to start in the winter?

Should I do strength training, too?



Sure, it's frigid out. Yes, the ground has a dusting of snow. But the arrival of winter doesn't have to equal the departure of your walking routine.

Why give up walking when it's so good for managing diabetes? Brisk walking—30 minutes or more, at least five days a week—helps your body use insulin better, strengthens your heart and bones, boosts circulation, and lowers your heart disease risk.

"People with diabetes can walk and exercise all year long, even in the winter," says Deena Adimoolam, MD, an assistant professor of endocrinology, diabetes, and bone disease at New York's Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Follow her tips for walking smart and safe.

Dress smart. To stay warm, cover all your body parts—especially your hands, feet, and ears. Remember a scarf, hat, and gloves.

Dress in layers. Think thermal underwear, sweat-shirts, and cold-weather outerwear. Layers keep air from escaping and you can peel them away as needed.

Protect your feet. Ward off foot problems by wearing sneakers or athletic shoes, not everyday shoes. "Make sure your shoes fit properly," she says. This prevents calluses, which can get worse over time.

Always wear socks—and layer them if needed.

Find a safe route. If you have neuropathy or problems with balance, be extra careful

on surfaces that may be icy or covered in snow. Try to walk on shoveled surfaces if possible.

"Take walks in the daytime, which is usually when visibility is best and it's typically warmer," Adimoolam says. "If you choose to be outside at night, walk in well-lit areas."

Be aware of black ice, which is hard to see and can lead to slips and falls.

Stay alert. Just because it's not hot doesn't mean you don't need water. "Winter air can be quite dry and make you thirsty," says Adimoolam. "Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration."

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia, like waxy, cold, or discolored skin, numbness, shivering, and weakness. If you see or feel these signs, cut your walk short and head indoors.

Warm up after walking. Help your body get back to its natural comfort zone after your walk. Keep your house well-heated. Warm up with a mug of hot (but not scalding) water. Don't be too quick to strip down. "Only remove layers once you've warmed up," says Adimoolam.

➔ Search for the slideshow **Fitness Tips for Beginner Athletes** at WebMD.com.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL SMITH, MD, CPT, WEBMD CHIEF MEDICAL DIRECTOR

GETTY IMAGES

Sweet Retreat

Don't let type 2 diabetes disrupt your holiday travel plans. Here's how to prep and pack for your vacation.

BY STEPHANIE WATSON

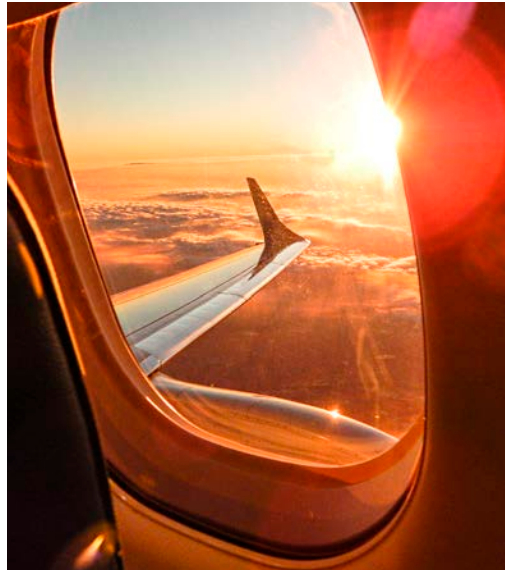
Traveling with type 2 diabetes is a little like traveling with kids. You can have a fulfilling vacation—you just need to plan well and carry along some extra gear. These tips can help you get ready for your trip.

Bring a doctor's note. “Get a standard letter from your doctor stating that you're under his or her care for diabetes, and because of diabetes you're required to take insulin or another medication,” says Susan Cotey, a registered nurse and diabetes educator with the Cleveland Clinic Lennon Diabetes Center. Also, if you are traveling abroad, ask your doctor if you need any vaccinations for the country you're visiting.

Do your research. Scope out a doctor, pharmacy, and hospital near your destination, in case of a medical emergency. If you travel abroad, contact the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (www.iamat.org) to find local doctors.

Stock up on medicine. Accidents happen. One of Cotey's patients dropped his insulin bottle on the tile floor of his hotel bathroom, shattering it. “Always plan for the worst,” she says. Bring at least twice the amount of pills or insulin you'll need for the entire trip, and take along an extra prescription.

Carry everything with you. “No matter how you travel—even if you're traveling by car—keep all the things you need accessible,”



Cotey says. Bring a small cooler with your insulin, other medications, testing supplies, and some juice or other simple carbohydrates in case your blood sugar dips. Though insulin is a liquid, you can bring it through airport security. Keep your insulin and testing supplies in a separate bag so you can show them to the TSA agent.

Eat wisely. When traveling, you might not have much control over your diet. “Sometimes the places you're stuck in don't have healthy options,” Cotey says. Bring your own snacks to prevent blood sugar dips. Choose foods that are easy to eat on the go, like granola bars or cheese and crackers. Because airplane meals may not be diabetes-friendly, call the airline ahead of time to request one that's low in sugar, cholesterol, and/or fat.

Prepare for time zone changes. “If you're taking insulin, you definitely want to talk to your doctor or diabetes educator before you go,” says Cotey. They can help you plan out the timing of your injections. For example, if you're headed east, your day will be shorter and you might not need as much insulin.

Watch your feet. If you go to the beach, avoid walking barefoot or in sandals. Nerve damage could prevent you from feeling the sharp edge of a shell or piece of glass. If you do wear sandals, coat your feet in sunscreen and check them for injuries when you return to your hotel.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

How often should I test my blood sugar while I'm away?
Changes in your schedule, diet, and activity level might require you to test more often and adjust your medicine dose accordingly.

How should I store my insulin when I travel?
Heat, cold, and direct sunlight can damage insulin and affect its potency. Store it in an insulated bag.

Can I drink the water in my destination?
Avoid drinking tap water—including ice—in foreign countries. Getting sick from contaminated water could throw off your diabetes control.

Do I need to disconnect my insulin pump on the plane?
That might be a good idea. Sometimes the change in air pressure can make your pump deliver too much insulin. Before your flight, make sure you know how to restart your insulin infusion correctly.

Side Show

DELICIOUS DISHES FOR YOUR HOLIDAY MEAL

At the best holiday feasts, roasted turkey and ham may be the guest of honor, but side dishes are the life of the party. And with a few sneaky swaps, you can turn time-honored classics into slimmed-down dishes everyone can enjoy. Switching less-starchy winter squash for sweet potatoes, bringing winter greens to the table, and preparing potatoes with less butter are three strategies to use this holiday season to make it a feast you can feel good about.

BY Kerri-Ann Jennings REVIEWED by Hansa Bhargava, MD, WebMD Senior Medical Director

PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK LOZIER; FOOD STYLING: CHARLIE WORTHINGTON



➤ For more recipes, try the [Healthy Recipe Finder](#) at WebMD.com.

HASSELBACK POTATO CASSEROLE

This dish is so pretty, it looks like you've worked for a long time to create it. But really, you just used a mandoline to quickly slice through two pounds of potatoes. The result? A crispy, flavorful update on baked potatoes. **SERVES 8**

2 pounds Yukon gold potatoes (about 8 medium)
1 cup shallots, sliced (2 large)
2 tbsp olive oil
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 tsp dried rosemary
1 tsp dried thyme
½ tsp salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Heat oven to 400°F.

Using a mandoline, thinly slice potatoes. Arrange them “standing up” in a 3-quart baking dish. In a small saucepan, gently sauté shallots in olive oil, then add chicken broth, rosemary, thyme, salt, and pepper. Boil for several minutes, until it reduces by half. Pour half of reduced chicken broth mixture over the potatoes and bake. After 30 minutes, pour the remaining mixture over potatoes. Continue to bake another 30 to 40 minutes, until potatoes are fully tender and tops are crisp.

Per serving: 129 calories, 3 g protein, 22 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (0.5 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 185 mg sodium, 3 g fiber, 1.5 grams sugar. Calories from fat: 25%.



WINTER GREENS GRATIN

This gratin gets its creaminess from lower-fat sour cream and Neufchatel cheese and its crunch from a crispy panko-parm topping. It's a decadent-tasting alternative to green beans that's ultra low in carbs. **SERVES 10**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 10 cups hearty winter greens, such as kale, mustard greens, collard greens, and/or Swiss chard, stemmed and chopped (about 2 bunches)
- ½ cup onion, diced
- 2 large cloves of garlic, minced
- ½ tsp thyme
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ cup lowfat sour cream
- 2 oz Neufchatel cheese
- ¼ cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup whole wheat panko

Heat oven to 400°F.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add olive oil. Add greens, onion, and garlic and cook until greens are wilted (you may need to do this in batches). Add thyme, salt, and nutmeg. Add sour cream and Neufchatel cheese to the skillet and stir to coat (the cream cheese will melt). Transfer the mixture to a baking dish. In a small bowl, mix panko and Parmesan. Sprinkle over greens and bake for 20 minutes.

Per serving: 108 calories, 5 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 186 mg sodium, 1 g fiber, <1 gram sugar. **Calories from fat: 48%.**



BUTTERNUT SQUASH CASSEROLE

Butternut squash is a lower-carb alternative to sweet potato. And this crumble topping is made heart-healthy with the addition of pecans, canola oil, and whole-wheat pastry flour. **SERVES 8**

FILLING

- 2 pounds butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- ¼ cup whole milk plain yogurt
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- Ground white pepper, to taste

TOPPING

- ½ cup chopped pecans
- ¼ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- ¼ cup unpacked brown sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 tbsp canola oil

Heat oven to 400°F.

Bring a large pot of water to boil. Add butternut squash and cook for 20 minutes, or until fork tender. Drain squash and mash with yogurt, butter, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and white pepper. Spread into a medium casserole dish.

To make the topping, combine pecans, flour, sugar, and salt in a small bowl. Stir in melted butter and canola oil. Sprinkle over squash mixture.

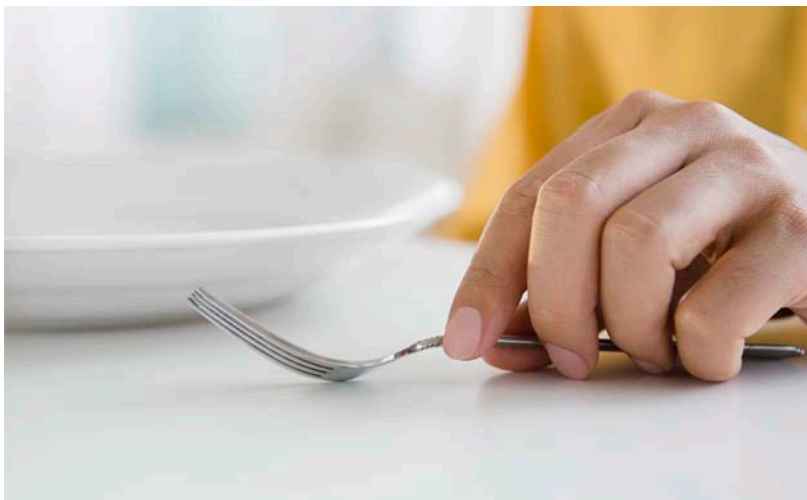
Bake for 30 minutes, or until topping is golden.

Per serving: 189 calories, 3 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 11 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 9 mg cholesterol, 212 mg sodium, 3 g fiber, 8 grams sugar. **Calories from fat: 51%.**

To Eat or Fast?

Prepare for bloodwork with this primer

BY LISA FIELDS



If you have diabetes, or your doctor thinks you might, certain blood tests can tell a lot about how your body processes blood sugar.

Sometimes you'll need to fast. That means not eating or drinking anything other than water for a specific amount of time before a doctor or nurse takes a blood sample. This will ensure all the food you've eaten has been digested. However, you don't need to fast for all blood sugar tests.

Fasting blood tests

Oral glucose tolerance test

This is a test used for diagnosis. You'll need to fast for eight hours. A nurse will start the test by taking a sample of your blood. Then you'll drink a sugary liquid and stay in the doctor's office. Two hours later, a nurse will take another blood sample for testing. If that shows a blood glucose level of 200 milligrams per deciliter or higher, you'll be diagnosed with diabetes.

A level of 140 to 199 milligrams per deciliter is a sign of prediabetes.

That's when your blood sugar is higher than normal but you might be able to keep diabetes at bay with some lifestyle changes.

This test is also used to diagnose a condition called gestational diabetes, which some women develop when they're pregnant. It's done the same way except a third sample is taken after three hours.

Fasting blood glucose test

Doctors also use this test to diagnose diabetes. You'll be asked to fast for eight hours. The test is usually done early in the morning so you don't have to go too long without eating. A blood glucose level of 126 milligrams per deciliter or higher is a sign of diabetes. A healthy score is below 100 milligrams per deciliter.

Non-fasting blood tests

Random blood glucose test

Doctors use this test to evaluate people who have serious diabetes symptoms. It can be given at any time on a moment's notice, so there's

no need to fast before the blood sample is taken. If your blood glucose level is 200 milligrams per deciliter or higher, that signals diabetes.

Oral glucose challenge test

Most pregnant women have this test to check for gestational diabetes, either at an initial prenatal visit if a woman is at risk for type 2 diabetes, or between 24 and 28 weeks for women with no known risk for the disease. Your doctor will ask you to have a sugary drink, stay in the office for an hour, then have a blood sample taken. You can have this test done with or without fasting and at any time of the day.

If your result is 130 milligrams per deciliter or higher, your doctor may ask you to come back another day to take another oral glucose tolerance test while fasting to confirm that you have gestational diabetes.

A1C test

This test measures your average blood glucose level during the past three months. That timeframe means it doesn't matter if you eat before the test. The result is given as a percentage; the higher the percentage, the higher your blood sugar levels have been.

Generally, the goal is for your A1C level to be less than 7%.

Blood glucose meter

If you have diabetes, you'll use this test to check your blood glucose levels at home. Your doctor will tell you how often you'll need to test and if you should do it at specific times. For example, you may need to test your levels before snacks or meals. But there's no specific need to fast beforehand.

REVIEWED BY MINESH KHATRI, MD, WEBMD MEDICAL REVIEWER

🔍 Search for [High Blood Sugar and Diabetes](#) at WebMD.com.

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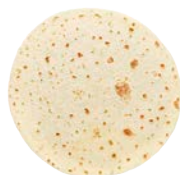
Easy Carb Counting

Control your carb intake with this helpful chart of 15 foods that contain just 15 grams

BY LOCKE HUGHES

For people with diabetes, carb counting is an important way to make sure blood glucose levels stay in your target range. While the amount of carbs you should eat depends on many things, such as how much you exercise and any medications you take, the recommended limit is 130 grams per day, distributed evenly between meals.

To help you stay on track, these 15 common foods contain around 15 grams of carbs.



1 (6-inch) tortilla



1 small piece of fresh fruit (4 oz)



1/3 cup of cooked pasta or rice



1/2 cup ice cream or sherbet



1/4 of a large baked potato



1/2 cup of canned or frozen fruit



1/2 English muffin



1 tablespoon of syrup or jam



2/3 cup of plain, fat-free yogurt



2 small cookies



4-6 crackers



1/2 cup of oatmeal



1 cup of soup



1 slice of bread



1/2 cup of a starchy vegetable

➤ Search for the slideshow [Your Guide to Eating Healthy Carbs](#) at [WebMD.com](#).

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Can you recommend a dietitian to help me plan holiday meals? A dietitian can help you choose healthy foods to balance the occasional treat.

Can I eat sweets? Can I drink alcohol? You can if your doctor has given you the green light—but understand your limits and know when to cut back.

If I do over-indulge and my blood sugar spikes, how can I lower it? Your doctor can give you step-by-step strategies to deal with high glucose.



Navigating the Holiday Buffet

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. Take the quiz to learn some tips.

QUIZ

1. Salad is a healthy buffet choice, but which of these dressings is lightest?

 - Russian
 - Italian
 - Caesar
2. To visualize the right portion size, which object should you use?

 - A medium dinner plate
 - Your head
 - Your fist
3. Which of these appetizer choices is healthiest?

 - Carrots with hummus
 - Pretzels
 - Guacamole and chips
4. If you choose to have alcohol, which drink is best?

 - Margarita
 - White wine spritzer
 - Vodka and cola

- ANSWERS**
1. Italian dressing is the best of the three options, with just over 70 calories per two 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. Each of your fists is about the size of one cup of food. Two cups is a good portion size for adults. One cup should be non-starchy vegetables (green beans, broccoli, mushrooms). Divide the remaining cup between whole grains and lean protein (skinless chicken breast, fish, tofu).
3. 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. 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.

REVIEWED BY HANSA BHARGAVA, MD, WEBMD SENIOR MEDICAL DIRECTOR

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