



Diabetes
New Zealand

Plan ahead for Christmas

The mere mention of Christmas sends shudders down the spines of many people working hard to manage their diabetes. All that food - Christmas dinner, work functions, social gatherings, Christmas drinks and end of year wind-ups.

Functions can be intimidating for someone who has done so well throughout the year. Good preparation and planning ahead can help avoid many of the pitfalls and reduce the stress involved with Christmas.

Here are some tips to help maintain your eating habits during the festive season.

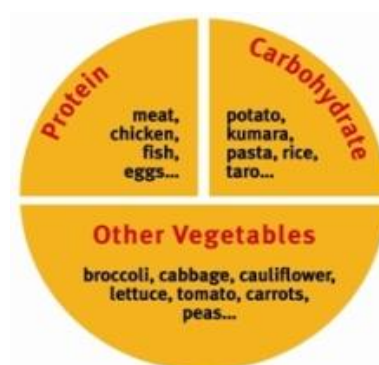
Aim for half a plate of vegetables

- Follow the Diabetes New Zealand ideal plate model (*see details on the right*) - this rule applies even on Christmas Day
- Summer is a great time for gardening and growing vegetables and fruit to eat
- Fresh herbs are popular in salads and nothing beats a salad prepared fresh from the garden moments before eating - remember to serve dressings separately
- Put some lettuces into the garden for harvesting on Christmas Day
- Char-grilled vegetables are delicious - cooking them on the BBQ helps to save space in the kitchen
- Leave the skin on vegetables for added fibre.

Moderation is the key

- Serve food on a smaller plate - it will look full with less food
- Clear the table as soon as everyone has finished eating rather than being tempted by leftovers
- Try something different - how about a BBQ rather than a full roast meal?
- Use herbs and spices to flavour food rather than fat or oil
- Nibbles before a meal aren't necessary. However, if you do serve them put them out when you need them rather than having them sit out all day to tempt you and others.

Base your plate on the principle of quarter of a plate of meat or meat alternative, quarter of a plate of carbohydrate, and at least half a plate of free vegetables.



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Don't confuse thirst with hunger

- Keep a jug of chilled water in the fridge
- Stock up on diet drinks when they are on special at the supermarket
- Prepare fancy ice cubes for fun drinks
- Freeze lemon or small pieces of fruit into ice cubes for added colour and flavour.

Desserts aren't necessary

- Save a dessert for a lighter meal rather than after a traditional Christmas dinner
- Fresh fruit such as freshly picked strawberries is a wonderful treat - take the grandchildren fruit picking before Christmas and make this a regular Christmas tradition
- Try fruit mixed with yoghurt and frozen - it's a delicious dessert
- Check your blood glucose levels to see if you can manage a small slice of cake
- Instead of a bowl of lollies, serve cherries or grapes.

Christmas is a great chance for some extra physical activity

With the best of intentions, the excitement of Christmas can cause stress. Physical activity can help to manage this:

- Have a game of cricket with the family
- Go for a walk along the beach
- Take a ball to the park
- Give Christmas presents with physical activity in mind such as a ball, cricket set, volley ball net, paddling pool or new golf clubs.

Don't despair

In the stress of Christmas, remember to take your medication as directed and continue with your physical activity routine.

If you do overeat, remember it is only one day. Jump back to your healthy eating habits the following day.

Top five Christmas gifts for people with diabetes

For those with diabetes, the prospect of watching others enjoying the delights of tasty but sugary Christmas cake can be a daunting one!

But there's no reason why you can't treat yourself or a loved one with diabetes at Christmas. Take a look at these great gift ideas for people with diabetes:

- Gift vouchers - if you're not sure what they want, let them choose!
- Pamper products - indulge with a selection of natural soaps, moisturisers and creams
- Plants and flowers - encourage your loved ones to get outside and enjoy the summer sun, with sunscreen of course, with some plants and gardening tools. Gardening can be incredibly therapeutic, and even lower stress levels.
- A pedometer - encourage that all important physical activity with a pedometer to help measure steps
- Home baking - bake a Christmas cake suitable for people with diabetes as everyone loves a gift made with your own hands.

Celebration Cake

Makes 1 large cake

- 450g currants
- 300g sultanas
- 1½ cups grated carrot, lightly packed (135g)
- ⅓ cup whisky
- 1⅓ cup unsweetened apple juice
- 100g dried apricots, chopped
- 100g butter
- 2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
- 2½ cups wholemeal flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1½ teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 eggs

Place currants, sultanas, grated carrot and whisky in a large mixing bowl. Heat apple juice, chopped apricots and butter together in a large pot until butter has melted. Dissolve bicarbonate of soda in this hot mixture, then pour this over fruit. Add dry ingredients and eggs and mix well.

Transfer mixture to a prepared 23 x 23cm cake tin (base lined with greaseproof paper and greased). Decorate surface with a few whole or chopped walnuts if desired. Bake at 160 C until cooked, approximately 55 minutes.

To make it easier to cut into serving size portions, cut cake into quarters first, then each quarter into 16 servings.

Divided into 64 equal servings, each serving provides approximately:

KJ 300 Cal 71 Fat (g) 1.5 Fibre (g) 2 Protein (g) 1 Carbohydrate (g) 13

Recipe courtesy of *Delicious Delights for Diabetics* by Dianne Lowry (no longer in print).

Bake a Celebration Cake - a rich fruitcake suitable for any special occasion.

