

How to safely navigate diabetes and Thanksgiving

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(HealthDay)—People with diabetes can have a healthy and safe

Thanksgiving dinner if they follow certain guidelines, a diabetes expert says.

The keys are pre-planning and moderation, according to Dr. Vanessa Arguello. She is a [health sciences clinical instructor](#) in the division of endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism at the UCLA School of Medicine in Los Angeles.

People with diabetes still need to take their medications, monitor their [blood sugar](#) and stay active, she added.

Arguello suggested having a moderate-sized meal with no more than 60 grams of carbohydrates for women and 75 grams for men. That can be followed by a small snack or dessert that has no more than 30 grams of carbohydrates.

Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables, one-quarter with lean meats, and the remaining quarter with starches and grains, she advised.

"Get some cardiovascular exercise and strength training in the morning to improve [glucose metabolism](#) for the rest of the day," she suggested in a university news release. And, for a potentially long-lasting meal like Thanksgiving dinner, "get up and move every 30 minutes during the meal to boost insulin sensitivity and lower [blood sugar levels](#)."

Arguello also cautioned about mixing alcohol and blood sugar medications. "This is because alcohol interferes with the liver's protective mechanism to increase blood sugars when they are low," she said. "This effect continues up to 12 hours after the last drink."

Thanksgiving hosts can help guests with diabetes by offering low-calorie food and drink options, such as [lean meats](#), non-starchy vegetable side dishes, and sugar-free desserts and drinks.

"Above all else, the most important thing that people who are hosting Thanksgiving dinners can provide for their guests who have diabetes is a supportive environment," Arguello said. "Don't pressure your guests into eating more than they desire or sampling all your delicious plates."

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [diabetes](#).

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