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DIABETES NOW

# HOT TOPICS!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DIABETES

## TAKE FIVE

An apple a day not only keeps the doctor away but also might add years to your life. In a study of 70,000 people over 13 years, those who had five daily servings of fruits and vegetables lived three years longer than individuals who never ate them. Does five servings sound like a lot? Start small. People who ate just one piece of fruit a day lived a year and a half longer than those who did not eat fruit.



Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition



## Walk This Way

You don't have to exercise for hours to reap the benefits. In a recent study, slightly obese older adults who had high blood sugar walked one of three ways: for 45 minutes each morning after breakfast, 45 minutes before dinner, or 15 minutes after every meal. Both the long morning walk and the multiple short walks helped lower blood sugar for up to three hours after lunch, but only the short walks continued to help lower blood sugar after dinner. One long walk before dinner did not lower blood sugar.

Source: Diabetes Care

# 150 minutes

AMOUNT OF MODERATE EXERCISE PER WEEK RECOMMENDED FOR PEOPLE WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES. THAT'S THE EQUIVALENT OF 30 MINUTES, FIVE DAYS A WEEK.

Source: American Diabetes Association

## LUNCH TIME

When it comes to your weight, it's not just what you eat but when. In a study of 420 men and women who went on a 20-week weight-loss diet, those who ate lunch before 3 p.m. each day lost more weight and lost it faster than those who ate lunch after 3—though their calorie count was the same. Early lunchers lost almost 22 pounds and more than 11% of their starting weights, while late eaters lost just under 17 pounds and 8% of their starting weights.

Source: International Journal of Obesity

## 2 to 3 servings

Amount of fish recommended each week for people with type 2 diabetes. Lean fish is high in protein and low in saturated fat.



Source: American Diabetes Association





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## LIVING WELL

# Flu Streak

'TIS THE SEASON FOR COLDS AND FLU. LEARN HOW THEY CAN AFFECT YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

*By Christina Boufis*

**A cold or the flu is miserable for anyone, but if you have type 2 diabetes, getting sick can be more unpleasant—even dangerous. People who have diabetes are three times more likely than others to be hospitalized for complications from the flu, according to the CDC.**

“Having type 2 diabetes puts you at a slightly higher risk of getting an infection in general,” says Nestoras Mathioudakis, MD, assistant professor of medicine and associate director of the Inpatient Diabetes Management Service at the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Why are you more vulnerable to catching a cold or the flu? “High blood sugars, even mildly high blood sugars, cause a slight decrease in immune function,” Mathioudakis explains. Add to this the fact that any stressor, such as an infection, triggers your body to release stress hormones that make blood glucose rise. What happens next is a vicious cycle: The flu can make you more hyperglycemic (higher blood sugar levels) and further compromise your immune system, so you have a harder time fighting off the infection, he says.

In addition, getting sick often affects your ability to eat. If you’re vomiting or not



eating, you’re not taking in enough carbohydrates or calories, which will further affect blood sugar.

Fortunately, you can take steps to stay healthy this season. “The most important thing to do is get the flu vaccine,” Mathioudakis says. But don’t wait until peak flu season (typically January and February). Get vaccinated in September, because flu season can begin as early as October.

Although there’s no vaccine to prevent colds, certain measures can help keep germs at bay. First up: Get enough zzz’s. “We know that people with diabetes who don’t get a good night’s sleep often wake up with higher glucose readings,” Mathioudakis says. Interrupted or

### SICK DAYS

IF YOU DO CATCH A COLD OR THE FLU, NESTORAS MATHIOUDAKIS, MD, SUGGESTS A FEW TIPS.

**Drink up.** Hydration is key for people with diabetes. Drink plenty of water and calorie-free liquids, like diet soda or tea without sugar.

**Check yourself.** If you have hyperglycemia that’s not coming down, keep checking until it does. Check your blood sugar every four hours and track the results.

**Read the label.** Or talk with your health care provider before taking any medications. Many cough suppressants, for example, contain sugar, so look for sugar-free versions.

inadequate sleep can cause your body to produce more cortisol or stress hormones. And cortisol lowers your immune function, he says.

What else? “Following a healthy diet that’s nutrient rich and diabetes friendly—a lower-carbohydrate, lower-fat diet—and controlling your glucose level could potentially lower your chances of getting an infection,” Mathioudakis says.

Finally, practice the trusted steps for reducing your risk of cold and flu: Wash your hands often with soap and water, stay away from others who are sick, and avoid touching your mouth and eyes.

Reviewed by  
**Brunilda Nazario, MD**  
WebMD Lead Medical Editor

# Nature of the FEAST

Lighten up your holiday menu with these delicious and diabetes-friendly recipes

By Kerri-Ann Jennings

Photography by Leigh Beisch

Holiday season brings to mind buttery casseroles, smothered green beans, and succulent roasts—all delicious and all poised to blow your calorie and carb budget. But with a few simple meal-planning and cooking strategies, you can celebrate the abundance of the season without upending your healthy eating goals.

**Find a balance.** Holiday feasts can be overwhelming because most dishes are heavy, from pigs-in-a-blanket to pumpkin pie. Stick to one or two all-out splurges and make sure there's plenty of lighter fare on the table. Jill Weisenberger, MS, RD, CDE, a Virginia-based dietitian and author of *Diabetes Weight Loss: Week by Week*, recommends two-thirds low-fat and healthy and one-third more indulgent.

Reviewed by Hansa Bhargava, MD  
WebMD Medical Editor

## Roasted Green Beans With Red Onions and Walnuts

Makes 6 servings

Roasting green beans with onions brings out a more intense flavor, while the toasted walnuts provide crunch along with heart-healthy fats.

### Ingredients

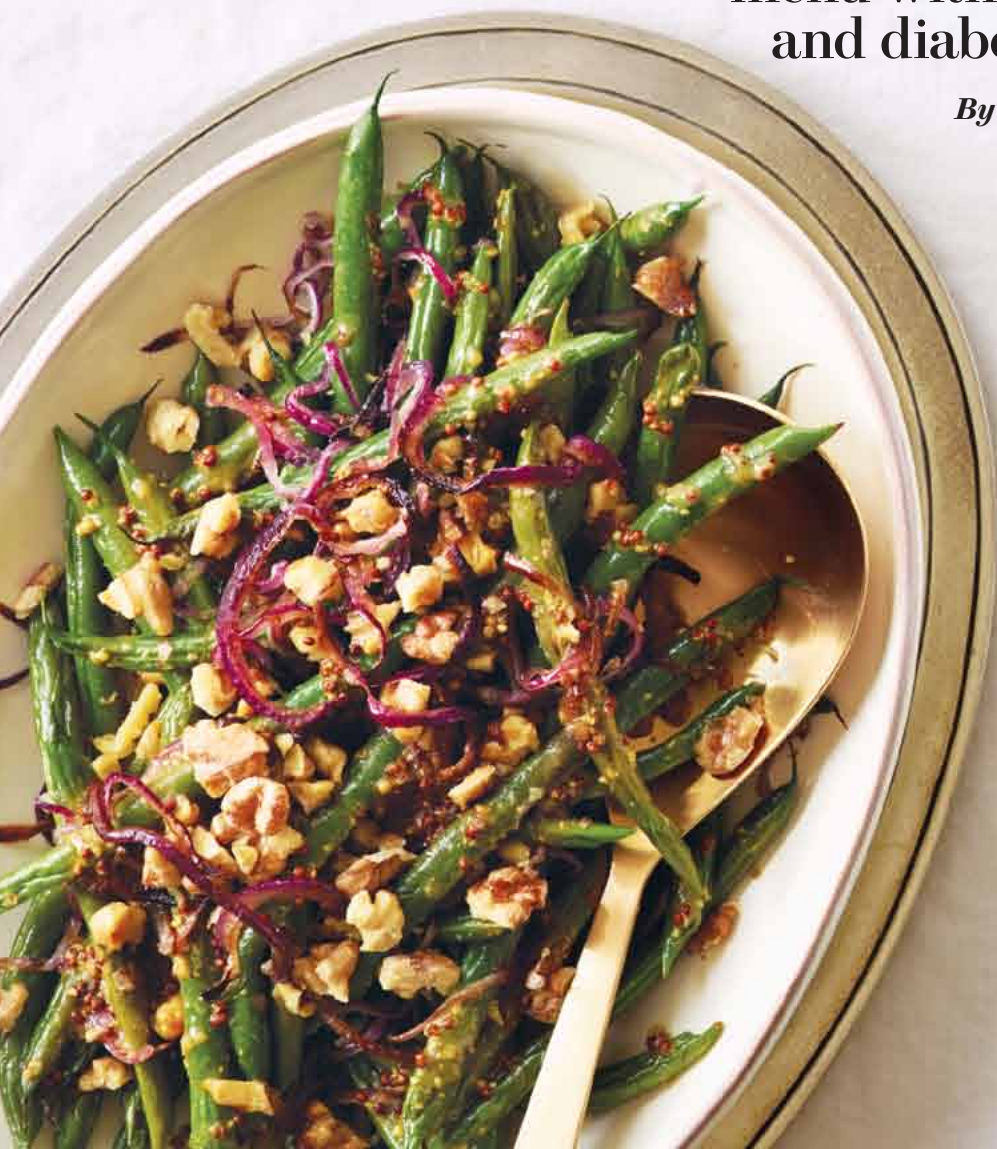
- 1 lb green beans, trimmed
- ½ cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp grainy mustard
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped

### Directions

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Toss green beans and red onion in a shallow roasting pan together with canola oil and salt. Roast until onions begin to caramelize and beans begin to soften and brown.
2. Meanwhile, whisk vinegar, olive oil, and mustard in a serving bowl.
3. Remove beans from oven and toss with vinegar mixture. Sprinkle with walnuts and serve.

### Per serving

88 calories, 3 g protein, 7 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat, 3 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 202 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 65%



## Roast Pork Loin With Apples and Cranberries

Makes 8 servings

Filling roasted pork with apple and dried cranberry stuffing is an easy way to get fruit on the holiday table. Plus, it adds a pretty splash of color to your plate.

### Ingredients

#### For the stuffing

- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 1 ½ cups diced sweet-tart baking apple, such as McIntosh or Paula Red (about 1 large apple)
- ½ cup diced yellow onion (about 1 small onion)
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- ½ tsp dried sage
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup apple cider

#### For the pork

- 1 2-lb pork loin
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- ½ cup apple cider

### Directions

1. Heat oven to 400°F. In a 10- or 12-inch frying pan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add apple and onion and sauté until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add salt, herbs, cranberries, and apple cider. Cook until liquid is absorbed, about 4 minutes.

2. Trim visible fat from pork loin and butterfly it by cutting lengthwise, starting at the thinner side through the loin until ¾ of the way through (pork should remain in one piece). Open up pork loin so it's laying flat and cover with a piece of plastic wrap. Pound pork to a 1-inch thickness, then remove plastic wrap. Pierce pork in several places and insert slices of garlic. Spread stuffing onto the pork loin evenly and fold to close. Tie it back together with kitchen twine in several places across and once lengthwise.
3. Heat oil in clean, oven-safe frying pan over high heat. Brown pork loin on both sides, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to oven (you could also transfer the pork loin to a roasting pan to continue cooking) and cook until pork reaches an internal temperature of 160°F, about 40 minutes.
4. Transfer cooked pork loin to a clean cutting board and let rest 5 minutes. Meanwhile, add remaining apple cider to the cooking pan and bring to a simmer. Cook until sauce has reduced.
5. Serve slices of stuffed pork loin with apple cider sauce.

### Per serving

292 calories, 31 g protein, 16 g carbohydrate, 11 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 90 mg cholesterol, 1 g fiber, 12 g sugar, 129 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 33%

**Turn up the heat.** Let's face it: Deep-fried turkeys do not make a healthy Thanksgiving. The tried-and-true method of roasting is one of the healthiest ways to cook your bird. This technique is also essential for drawing out the natural sweetness and complex flavor of root vegetables, Brussels sprouts, and green beans. "A lot of people who say they don't like vegetables such as beets or onions like them once they try them roasted," Weisenberger says. "Plus, since roasting doesn't use a lot of water, you don't lose a lot of nutrients." She recommends roasting Brussels sprouts with apples and a little balsamic vinegar for a delicious holiday dish.

**Play up veggies.** You don't need to drown veggies in fat and sugar to make them tasty. In fact, getting a few healthy veggie sides on the table not only adds color to your menu but also lightens up the whole feast. Healthy vegetable appetizers are also welcome at the holidays. Serve crudité (sliced veggies such as carrots, cucumbers, and bell peppers) with a lighter dip (something with a low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt base, or even hummus). "Marinated mushrooms and artichokes with whole grain crackers or toast are so incredibly simple. Or thread small grape or cherry tomatoes with mozzarella balls and herbs onto skewers," Weisenberger says.

**Fall back on fruit.** While veggies should play leading roles in your holiday feast, don't forget about fruit. Holiday dishes are a great place to add fruit, which lends a natural sweetness and an extra boost of fiber. Stuff a roast pork loin with cranberries and apple (see recipe), or toss crimson pomegranate seeds and juicy orange slices into a salad for festive color. A splash of orange juice instead of sugar will sweeten a sweet potato casserole.

**Use whole grains.** If you're baking, you can easily sneak in whole grains by swapping white flour for 100% whole wheat pastry flour—it adds texture, fiber, and nutrients. With whole grains, it doesn't have to be all or nothing, Weisenberger says. "If your guests appreciate whole grains, go for it. Otherwise just

*continued on page 7*



## Beet-Goat Cheese "Caprese" Salad

Makes 8 servings

Traditional summer tomato-mozzarella salad gets a festive winter twist in this pairing of beets and goat cheese. Drizzled with balsamic glaze and a sprinkling of salted pistachios, it's an impressive but easy-to-make dish. If you buy pre-cooked and peeled beets (available in most produce sections), you can make this salad in minutes.

### Ingredients

- 2 lbs beets, cooked, cooled, and peeled (about 11 medium 2-inch or 20 small beets)

- 8 oz herbed goat cheese, sliced into rounds
- balsamic glaze, for drizzling
- 4 oz shelled salted pistachios, chopped

### Directions

1. Slice beets and arrange on a serving dish with goat cheese rounds.
2. Drizzle with balsamic glaze and sprinkle with chopped pistachios.

### Per serving

263 calories, 14 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate, 17 g fat (8 g saturated fat), 30 mg cholesterol, 4 g fiber, 11 g sugar, 241 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 57%

*continued from page 6*

mix them. Use French bread and whole wheat bread in your stuffing, or white rice with brown or wild rice."

**Swap out whole-fat dairy for low-fat or skim.** In many recipes, you can swap out whole milk for low-fat (1%) milk without sacrificing flavor. This technique can even work with cream—try using low-fat and nonfat varieties of evaporated milk in place of cream in sauces and soups.

**Rely on lower-starch "starches."** While potatoes and sweet potatoes are holiday classics, there's no need to double up. If you're serving potatoes, whip up a butternut or acorn squash

side dish instead of sweet potatoes to bring orange brightness to the table. If you're making a classic sweet potato casserole, swap out mashed potatoes for mashed cauliflower.

**Substitute healthier fats.** One of the easiest swaps you can make at the holidays is to replace foods high in saturated fats with healthier alternatives, says Weisenberger, who often replaces 4 tablespoons butter with 3 tablespoons olive or canola oil in baked goods recipes. But you don't need to entirely ditch butter, which adds a lot of flavor, even in small amounts. When sautéing vegetables, use a little butter for flavor along with canola oil.

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# Acts of Care

**IN OUR EIGHTH ANNUAL WEBMD HEALTH HEROES TRIBUTE, WE HONOR AMERICANS WHO ARE DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS FOR THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF THE NATION. BY SUSAN DAVIS**

## *Tech Support*

Joining a support group for people with diabetes was “transformative” for **Manny Hernandez**. “It was the first time I was able to meet, learn from, and share with other people like myself,” says Hernandez, 41, who has type 1 diabetes. “Within an hour, I learned more about diabetes management and pump use than in my first four years of living with the condition.”

The group so inspired Hernandez that in 2007, he established two online social networks designed to connect people with diabetes and raise awareness about the disease: TuDiabetes.org (in

English) and EsTuDiabetes.org (in Spanish), which together have more than 50,000 registered members. A year later, he and his wife founded the Diabetes Hands Foundation (DHF) in Berkeley, Calif., which aims to “bring together people touched by diabetes for positive change.”

Hernandez also wants people to understand the impact small changes can have on their health. The foundation’s Big Blue Test program encourages people with diabetes to test their blood sugar before and after exercising and post the results online. Most people report up to a 20% drop in blood sugar. This data is then aggregated and presented at diabetes scientific conferences. For each entry, sponsors make a donation to needy people with diabetes. Since 2010, DHF has granted \$250,000 through the Big Blue Test to diabetes programs in the United States, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Haiti.



# School Work

Soon after enrolling her son, Jared, in kindergarten, **Tracy Milligan** of Jacksonville, Fla., got disturbing news. Under a new school district policy, her son, who has type 1 diabetes, couldn't attend his neighborhood school (which had no full-time nurse) unless a parent came to the school to give him insulin shots.

For two and a half years, Milligan, 41, drove from her job to give Jared the shots. Then after trying in vain to get the district to change its policy, Milligan decided to fight at the state level. Working with the American Diabetes Association (ADA), she contacted state legislators and motivated other parents to speak up.

In 2010, Florida legislators unanimously passed a law that prohibits school districts from assigning children to a particular school just because they have diabetes. "This essentially ended discrimination against children with diabetes," Milligan says.

Milligan is active in the ADA's national "Safe at School" campaign, which aims to ensure that all schoolchildren with diabetes get the medical care they need. She has traveled to Washington, D.C., to talk to legislators, assisted with webinars on the campaign, spoken to the media, and taught parents how to advocate for their children. "This work has empowered me to stand up for my child and others with diabetes," she says.





## HEALTH CHECK

### DO YOU KNOW YOUR A1C?

If you have diabetes, you've probably heard about the HbA1c—or A1c—test, even in casual conversations, as when **Flutetooter**, a WebMD diabetes community member, asked another member, “What does your fasting sugar usually run, and what was your latest A1c?” The A1c test provides an average of your blood glucose measurements over the last two to three months. It allows your doctor to see how well your blood sugar is controlled over the long term, which can help you reduce your risk of diabetes-related complications. Take our quiz to learn more about this important test.

## QUIZ

- The target A1c number is:
  - Below 5
  - Below 7
  - Below 9
  - 10 to 12
- You should have your A1c level tested:
  - Every five years
  - Every two years
  - Once a year
  - Several times a year
- If your A1c level is too high, your doctor will:
  - Suggest you take insulin injections
  - Suggest you change your diet
  - Suggest you exercise more
  - All or any of the above
- You should have an A1c test if you have:
  - Type 1 diabetes
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - Prediabetes
  - Any of the above

**Answers: 1. b.** In general, the target A1c is below 7, although this depends on many factors, including your medical history. Each graduation matters because each percentage drop in your A1c lowers your risk of diabetes-related complications (such as eye disease, heart disease, nerve damage, stroke, and kidney disease) by 40%. **2. d.** You should get your A1c tested at least two times a year. It should be checked quarterly if your blood sugar control is not adequate. **3. d.** Depending on your medical history, your doctor may recommend lifestyle changes (such as a healthier diet or more exercise) and/or insulin or other therapies to control your blood sugar levels. **4. d.** Doctors recommend the A1c test for people who have type 1 or type 2 diabetes as well as those who are at risk for diabetes (prediabetes).

### SOURCES:

Cleveland Clinic; NIH; WebMD Diabetes Health Center



### ASK YOUR DOCTOR

1

Are there lifestyle changes I can adopt to lower my blood sugar?

2

Do I need to change my medications to achieve better control?

3

If I'm overweight, how much weight should I lose to improve my health?

4

How often should I have my A1c level tested?