

YOUR CARE POLMED

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5 ways to manage diabetes over the holiday season



The holidays is a time to unwind. It's also a time where people often overindulge in sweet treats, fatty foods and alcohol during the many year-end social gatherings. This can be harmful to the 4.5 million South Africans diagnosed with diabetes.

There are, however, a few simple ways that those with diabetes can manage their condition and still enjoy the festivities.

1. INDULGE IN HEALTHY SNACKS

We often forget the extra snacking of sweets and salted treats during the holiday season can spike blood sugar levels, which can lead to complications.

Rather choose these healthier holiday snacks and beverages:



Seeds



Avocado



Hard-boiled egg with home-made guacamole



Handful of almonds



Low-glycaemic index (GI) fruits (like berries, apple or banana) with plain unsweetened yoghurt or peanut butter



Raw vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli or peppers) with hummus



Grilled vegetables (such as tomatoes, brinjal or baby marrow)



Green/rooibos teas and fruit-infused water (like cucumber and mint or berries) instead of alcoholic, sugary and fizzy drinks

2. REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICATION

Medication helps to manage your condition by regulating insulin levels. As busy as the holiday season is, it can be easy for you to forget to take it.

Tips to take your medication on time:



Set a reminder on your phone.



Ask family or friends to remind you.



Carry your medication with you to take it at the appropriate time.

3. GET ACTIVE FOR A BIT EACH DAY

Exercising helps regulate blood sugar levels and reduce the risk of complications. Include at least **150 minutes of physical activity every week**.

To help reach this goal, aim to include 30 minutes of exercise on most days by doing some of the following activities:



Brisk walking



Skipping with a jump rope



Dancing



Playing with the kids in the garden



Hiking with family or friends

NOTE: It is always best to consult with your doctor before starting a new exercise programme.

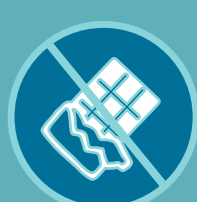
4. GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Sleep deprivation can increase the risk for developing type 2 diabetes. It also increases the risk for health complications (such as nerve pain) in those already diagnosed with diabetes.

Follow these guidelines to get enough sleep during the holidays:



Stick to your regular sleep schedule.



Avoid late-night snacking.



Drink a cup of decaf or rooibos tea before bed.



Stop using devices at least an hour before you go to bed – read a few chapters of your book instead.

5. DON'T FORGET THE EFFECT OF STRESS ON BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

Unfortunately, some of the past year's stress as well as worries about the coming year can transfer into your holiday break. This can increase stress levels and in turn raise blood sugar levels.

Try the following to help manage stress levels:



Meditation



Yoga



Set aside dedicated time for yourself, away from family and friends



Set boundaries – don't be afraid to say no



Monitor your finances to prevent financial worries

The holiday season is a great time to unwind and take a break. However, you should never take a break from managing your health – this should always be your priority.

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