

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Keep Blood Sugar Controlled During the Holidays

It's almost Christmas, and those cookies are driving you crazy! If you have diabetes, then you know that controlling your blood sugar (or blood glucose) greatly increases your chance of living a long and healthy life. Did you know that physical activity plays a huge role too? Along with a healthy, well-balanced diet, keeping active is one of the best things you can do. It will help manage your blood glucose and your weight. It can reduce your cholesterol and blood pressure, improve your circulation, reduce your risk of heart disease and nerve damage, and even reduce your need for medications. During these couple of weeks when we tend to eat more than usual, extra exercise can help balance all the extra food. Keep moving!

How does physical activity help? Muscles require sugar for energy all the time. They need even more during physical activity. If you exercise regularly, your body will become more sensitive to insulin. This will lower your blood sugar without any medication!

You don't need to go to the gym or run a marathon to see the benefits of activity. You just have to move more! Keep everyday items like bottles of laundry detergent or cans of soup beside the TV. During commercials, do some arm exercises! Find an activity you enjoy and make time to do it. Simple activities like walking are also great ways to move more. Look for ways to fit in 10 minutes of

activity here or there throughout the day. Park farther away from the store. Walk a loop around your block or office building. Take the stairs each time you have the choice. It all adds up!

How much physical activity should you try to do? Any is better than none. If you have not been active for awhile, try adding in short 10 minute spurts of movement whenever you can. Build up to around 150 minutes per week—if you have two 10 minute sessions every day for a week, you are just about there!

Should you eat before exercising? How much should you eat? What is best to eat? The answers to these questions are not the same for everyone. As a general rule, if your blood sugar is less than 100, eat a snack about one hour before you exercise. Try a piece of fruit or a half of a whole wheat bagel or another food you enjoy that has both starch and fiber. This will help prevent your blood sugar from dropping dangerously low during your activity.

If your blood sugar is between 100 and 130, you don't need a snack unless you will be vigorously active or exercising for a long time. If you are, try to eat a snack with both carbohydrates and protein. Good examples are peanut butter crackers or a half a cheese sandwich. If your blood sugar is above 300, do not exercise. It could cause your blood sugar to rise even more.

Before you start a new exercise program, talk with your doctor. It's important! If you are taking insulin or a few other medications that lower your blood sugar, you have an increased risk of hypoglycemia (very low blood sugar). That can be dangerous. Check your blood glucose before, during, and after you exercise. You may have to tweak your diabetes treatment plan, such as when

you take insulin. You may also have to change when you or how much you eat.

Eating well and staying active will help you live a long and healthy life with diabetes! When you are finished exercising and tired of turkey, enjoy this quick, nutritious meal. Remember to load your taco with extra vegetables! Merry Christmas, and many more!

Garbanzo Tacos

2 cans rinsed garbanzo beans (chickpeas)	½ c. diced red bell pepper
1 packet taco seasoning	½ c. diced green bell pepper
1 c. onions – diced	1 c. Romaine lettuce - thinly sliced
1 tsp olive oil	1 c. tomatoes - diced
½ c. salsa	6 tortillas - whole-grain (soft or hard)

Heat olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions, red and green bell peppers, and taco seasoning, and sauté for 2 minutes. Add garbanzo beans and sauté for 2 additional minutes. Spoon 1/2 c. of mixture into each tortilla. Top with lettuce, tomato, and salsa. Serves: 6.