

Social Study

Don't pass up parties or dinners out. Hit the town with this going-out guide BY MICHELE COHEN MARILL



Whether you're on a dinner date or spending a night out with friends, type 2 diabetes doesn't need to intrude like an unwanted guest. You can eat, drink, and dance the night away, as long as you stay within healthy limits.

"It's so important to enjoy life and not let diabetes drag you down," says certified diabetes educator Janis Roszler, MS, RD, author of *Diabetes on Your Own Terms*. So give taboos the boot and focus on balance. Let a relaxed attitude guide your evenings out as well. If you're at ease with managing diabetes, your companions will be, too, even if you need to test your blood sugar before a meal. "The people who have the most success are the ones who don't make a big deal about it and don't try to hide it," says Roszler.

Avoid the mistake of starving yourself during the day so you can eat more on a dinner date. Don't go more than four or five

hours without eating and keep snack food handy in your purse or car, Roszler suggests.

Practice portion control at restaurants.

The plate method is a no-fuss way to keep your eating in line at restaurants and parties. Fill half of a standard 9-inch dinner plate with nonstarchy vegetables or salad. Your protein should fit in one-quarter of the plate, and the other quarter is for carbohydrates such as rice or pasta. If you want some cake or other dessert later, eat less of the carbohydrates.

"In 99% of restaurants, you can choose to eat healthfully," says Hope Warshaw, RD, a certified diabetes educator in Alexandria, Va., and author of *Eat Out, Eat Well: The Guide to Healthier Restaurant Eating*. If portion sizes at your favorite dining spot are huge, for example, she suggests sharing an entrée with a dinner companion. Don't shy away from asking for substitutions or accommodations.

DRINK RAP

Having type 2 diabetes doesn't mean you can't tip a celebratory glass of champagne or have some wine with dinner. Avoid blood sugar spikes and dips with these tips.

Drink alcohol with food, and avoid mixers or sweet wine. Many have sugars that can cause your blood sugar to spike. Check your blood sugar to see how the alcohol is affecting you. Keep in mind that alcohol can lower blood sugar as long as 24 hours later.

Limit alcohol to one drink a day for women and two a day for men. A drink is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1½ ounces of vodka, whiskey, or other distilled spirits.



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