

Tips for diabetes and the festive season

1. Traveling during the festive season

Are you planning a trip this festive season? There are a few things you should consider before you set off.

Driving

If you take **blood glucose lowering medications, including insulin**, you are at risk of hypoglycaemia (hypos). Though the good news is, with a little planning you can avoid having a hypo.

1. Before you get in the car, check your blood glucose level. It needs to be above 5mmol/L and stable before you drive.
2. Carry a blood glucose meter with you when you drive.
3. Carry some fast acting and longer acting carbohydrate foods (or drinks) with you as well as keeping extra supplies in your vehicle.
4. If you are driving for two hours or more, recheck your blood glucose level at least every two hours to make sure it stays above 5mmol/L.

If you've recently started taking blood glucose lowering medications (including insulin), don't forget that you need to notify your [Driver Licensing Authority](#) (DLA) in your State or Territory.

Learn more about [driving and diabetes here](#).

Flying

If you're planning a flight this festive season, it's important to plan ahead to make sure you fly smoothly.

1. Place all your medication, insulin, glucagon, delivery devices and testing equipment in your carry-on luggage, preferably split between two of your bags in case one goes missing.
2. Pack a separate small bag with the bare minimum quantity of insulin, injection devices, testing equipment and hypo treatment needed for the flight. If flying long-haul, pack enough for the first leg and refill it before each new leg.
3. If you use an insulin pump or continuous/flash glucose monitor, you're not required to remove it at a security point.
4. Keep your diabetes supplies where you can reach them immediately, such as in the seat pocket in front of you. Avoid putting them under your seat or in the overhead locker.

Learn more about [flying and diabetes here](#).

2. Enjoying food and drinks during the festive season

We all love enjoying delicious meals during the festive season, but all these tasty meals can be a big change from your usual diet.

Alcohol

Do you enjoy a drink with your festive celebrations? It's normal to enjoy a few extra drinks over the festive season. If you have diabetes, you can still enjoy alcohol in moderation though there are some extra things to consider to manage your diabetes well. Learn about diabetes and alcohol in this [fact sheet](#).

Food

Are you catering for family and friends this Christmas? It can be tempting to taste test the gingerbread dough. Have some healthy snacks on hand to help your blood glucose levels when preparing food for guests. Looking for some quick snack ideas? Read the NDSS [Healthy snacks fact sheet](#).

Traditional Christmas foods are usually high in carbohydrates. Try to keep your total carbohydrate intake similar to any other day. Take small portions of different dishes so you don't miss out on your favourite Christmas foods. Learn more about counting carbohydrates [in this online program from NDSS](#).

3. Managing hypos during the festive season

Don't let the fear of hypos get in the way of enjoying the Christmas period. There are ways to treat hypos as soon as you begin experiencing symptoms, which can stop your glucose levels from dropping further. You can read more about [treating hypos](#) in this fact sheet.

4. Staying well during the festive season

Over the Christmas and New Year break, many health professionals are also taking a break. Check that you have an updated sick day management plan to cover you over the Christmas break in case of an emergency. Read about [sick days management plans](#) here.

NDSS Helpline hours

When it comes to diabetes, there is no such thing as a break. That's why the NDSS Helpline on **1800 637 700** will remain open during the holidays, for anyone that needs support during this time. You can find their holiday period operating hours on their website: www.ndss.com.au.