

Count your Blessings Count your Calories

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There is no special diet for diabetes. To control your blood sugar, people with diabetes should eat small and regular meals with evenly spread carbohydrate throughout the day. They should also reduce sugar and fat intake and incorporate high fibre food into their daily diet.

Popular foods for Chinese New Year can be lower in calories, fats and sugar if we make some healthy changes to our recipes such as choosing healthier ingredients and using healthier cooking methods. If we dine out, we can order healthier dishes or consume less high-calorie foods.

Here are some useful tips:

1 Choose lean meat instead of fatty meat or pork belly.

4 Replace processed meat (e.g. Chinese sausage, luncheon meat) with fresh meat.

2 Trim off poultry skin.

5 Instead of deep fried, choose healthier cooking method such as steaming, boiling, grilling, stewing, braising and stir frying.

3 Limit Chinese New Year high-calorie goodies and replace them with healthier snacks like baked nuts, mandarin oranges or dried fruit.

6 Choose plain water or sugar-free beverages instead of soft and sweetened drinks.

With so many delicious food and treats during the Chinese New Year festival, it may be a challenge for us to watch what we eat. Overindulging and excessive intake of the popular foods and treats may lead to increased blood sugar levels and weight gain.

Take a look at the calories and carbohydrate content of these favourite Chinese New Year goodies:

Niangao

1/4 piece (105g)
244 calories (kcal)
56g carbohydrate
(equivalent to 1 bowl of rice)



Bakwa

1 piece (94g)
370 calories (kcal)
47g carbohydrate
(equivalent to 3/4 bowl of rice)



Pineapple Tarts

3 pieces (60g)
280 calories (kcal)
42g carbohydrate
(equivalent to 2/3 bowl of rice)



Loveletters

3 rolls (39g)
168 calories (kcal)
29g carbohydrate
(equivalent to 1/2 bowl of rice)



Kuih Bangkit

3 pieces (12g)
45 calories (kcal)
8g carbohydrate
(equivalent to less than 1/4 bowl of rice)



Twisted Cookies

3 pieces (36g)
202 calories (kcal)
18g carbohydrate
(equivalent to 1/3 bowl of rice)



TO PREVENT OVEREATING:

- Do not skip meals or substitute meals with snacks.
- Eat slowly and enjoy every bite.
- Drink more water before and during each meal.
- Have more vegetables for each meal and incorporate whole grains whenever possible. This will help to fill you up and make you feel full.
- Avoid visiting on an empty stomach. Have a portion of healthy snacks, e.g. fruits, sandwich, wholemeal biscuit before you leave home.
- Share festive treats with relatives and friends.

People with diabetes should practise caution when drinking. Do not drink on an empty stomach or when your blood glucose is low. If you choose to drink, follow the guidelines and have it with food. Extra caution should be taken for those who are on insulin or medication. According to Health Promotion Board Singapore, men should not drink more than two standard drinks a day and women should not drink more than one standard drink a day. A standard drink is equal to one can of beer (330ml), half a glass of wine (175ml) and one shot of spirit (35ml).

In conclusion, be mindful to eat in moderation and not to overindulge, just because Chinese New Year happens only once a year. For those who are on medication, remember to take your medication during this festive season. Put your medicines into a pill box and take them with you on all your outings.

Lastly, be physically active! Go for a walk or do any exercise that you enjoy. It will help control your blood sugar and burn some calories, too.