

RanDee: Hi, everyone! Welcome to our Diabetes Awareness Month Talk: A Blood Sugar Friendly Thanksgiving. I'm RanDee, a dietitian here at Synergy Health and Wellness, and I'll be operating the camera. Don't judge--we're here with our 67th attempt at this video. Now I'll introduce you to Kacey, who will take it from here.

Kacey: Hi, everyone. I'm Kacey. I'm a dietitian and diabetes educator at Synergy. Thanks for joining us. In addition to being Diabetes Month, it's also the start of the holiday season, which can be a stressful time to try and manage blood sugar. Today we're going to talk about all things Thanksgiving and how we can best have a carb friendly Thanksgiving while preventing big blood sugar spikes. Today we have all of our traditional Thanksgiving food and we've divided it into carb-based foods, and non-carb foods. We're going to utilize the plate method to plan out how to dish up dinner. If you've worked with us before, you may remember the plate method is half vegetables, quarter protein, and quarter carbs. I suggest filling with protein and vegetables first and then save the carbs for last. I'm going to put a good serving of turkey breast here on my plate, filling up a quarter of it. Our vegetable is a salad with mixed greens, shaved Brussels, carrots, pumpkin seeds, and Parmesan cheese. There's not any dressing, but you could add a really simple vinaigrette or something like olive oil and lemon juice to keep it low carb. I'm going to put salad on half my plate. Now I've got non-starchy veggies, protein, and I still have a quarter plate to fill with carbs. On this side of the table, we've got mainstream carb foods: stuffing, green bean casserole (which is lower carb but does have some from milk, cream of mushroom soup, and fried onions.) We've got cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, candied yams, and rolls. I suggest picking your favorite items that maybe you don't have access to year-round. I'm going to put green bean casserole on my plate; half a cup has about nine grams of carbs. We're aiming for about 45 to 60 grams of carbs total for our meal.

RanDee: It sounds like by using the plate method, we almost don't have to count. If we're sticking to about a quarter of the plate, it's naturally between that 45 and 60?

Kacey: Yes, absolutely. I'm going to give you the carb counts for reference, but using about a quarter of your plate is 45 to 60 grams of carbs, so we don't have to measure everything. And then I'm going to take some candied yams which has 45 grams of carb in half a cup. You can see, I filled a quarter of my plate.

I'm going to put some gravy on my turkey; this gravy doesn't have carbs, but if you are making one with a flour base it's going to have a small amount of carbs--maybe about five grams. We're going to top our turkey with gravy, and call that a meal.

Some other sources of carbs at your meal might be alcohol. Wine, beer, mixed drinks, all have varying amounts of carb in them. If you are wanting to indulge, keep that in mind or have that at a different time of the day and stick with water at your meal.

Some alternative suggestions, to increase non-starchy veggies or lower carb options could be carrots with a small amount of glaze. (We have a recipe on our website, synergyhealthbend.com, under our Diabetes Month tab for glaze carrots that are lower in carb than the yams) You could also do roasted Brussels, sauteed or steamed green beans instead of casserole, you could do cauliflower or half cauliflower with your potato to make that a lower carb option.

RanDee: What about with stuffing? I made one years ago where I added broccoli, so it was still stuffing and all the goodies, but a little bit lower carb because it had some veggies added.

Kacey: Oh yeah, that's a good idea. I'm sure there's a lot of recipes online utilizing lower carb breads or beefing it up with a lot of veggies to take away some of the carbs. One roll has around 30 grams of carbs, so if that's your carb of choice, just keep that in mind. I personally feel like we can have bread any day of the year so it's not usually my top choice on Thanksgiving. I'm going to show you another plate over here. This is my preference because stuffing is my favorite. Half the cup of stuffing has about 20 grams of carb. A cup of mashed potatoes has 15 to 20 grams of carb. And then cranberry sauce has about 20 grams of carb in a quarter cup so I've just used an eighth of a cup here. This meal is rounding out to around 45 grams total.

RanDee: What about dessert?

Kacey:

Great question. Pies, as you can imagine, are high in carb. So an eighth of a pie is a typical serving, and in apple pie, for example, an eighth of a pie has 45 grams of carb. Pumpkin pie is our lowest carb dessert option and it has 35 grams of carb in an eighth of a pie. Pecan pie would be our highest carb option with about 65 grams of carb in one piece, all pieces being an eighth of a pie.

RanDee:

Okay. And how do we make that fit if we've already spent our budget on our plate?

Kacey:

Good question. So I recommend spreading out your food options throughout the day. You're going to have one meal with 45 or 60 grams of carbs, like the plate method that we just showed you, and then you're going to wait a few hours and you're going to have, say, dessert at that time. And that's going to be your next 45-ish to 60, depending on your choice of pie option.

RanDee:

On our website, I think you shared a recipe for pumpkin pie that maybe had tofu in it. Is it lower carb?

Kacey:

It is. It has about half the amount of carbs of regular pumpkin pie, and you can always make that option or a regular pumpkin pie without a crust to reduce the carbs even more. Baked apples are another great way to enjoy a dessert without a lot of carb from the crust.

RanDee:

Okay, so it sounds like still enjoying all the foods you love, but spreading them out so that you're just not going overboard on your blood sugar budget at one time.

Kacey:

Yeah, you want to keep some mindful eating in mind. We typically tend to get to the point of being uncomfortably full on Thanksgiving, and at that point we're not really enjoying our food anymore. So keeping in mind your hunger and fullness level and trying to stop when you're full and save the rest of that food that you're wanting to enjoy for a later time can help prevent uncomfortableness, but also keep your blood sugar a little more stable. We want to try to avoid overloading our system with 90 plus grams of carb at one time, which you could see would be easy to do if you had all the carb options and dessert all at one time.

RanDee:

Okay. What are some other ways that we can be mindful of our blood sugars or help bring our blood sugars down during the day?

Kacey:

That's a great question. I definitely recommend not skipping breakfast, because if you are going to go extended periods of time without food, your liver is still going to release a bunch of sugar anyways so you're still going to end up with a potentially high blood sugar, even though you haven't had anything to eat. So I recommend having your normal breakfast rather than trying to save up all your carbs for one meal later in the day. Eat consistently, like we said, and then drinking lots of water can actually help lower your blood sugar along with some movement. Getting out for a walk or playing some football can all be helpful in lowering that blood sugar, especially after a meal.

RanDee:

Gotcha. Thank you.

Kacey:

And just keep in mind that Thanksgiving doesn't have to be all about the food. Keep in mind the reason for the season and focus on some other aspects of the day, your traditions or favorite movies or things that you enjoy doing instead of all focused on food.

RanDee:

So it sounds like we want people to be able to enjoy the foods that they love, but again, without going over on their blood sugars in one sitting, and also just thinking about why this matters or why we might want to be mindful of our blood sugars during the Thanksgiving meal or the holiday season. I think you once told me something about A1C increases during the holidays. Can you touch on that?

Kacey:

Yeah. So typically we see A1Cs go up anywhere from 1% to 2% after the holiday season, which is pretty significant. Typically, one meal or one day is not going to make a huge impact on your A1C, but what we do over three months time definitely does. And if you think about Halloween to New Years, that's a long stretch of time where we're in holiday mode. I recommend trying to keep the holiday around the holiday for the most part, and then just be on your normal routine all the other days in between to help keep that A1C lower. But then when it comes to the holiday itself, try to utilize these tips to prevent a huge blood sugar spike, because that's not going to feel good. You don't want to end up with symptoms or in the hospital (worst case scenario) from high blood sugar on the day. One day

isn't going to make or break everything, but you still want to try to do your best to keep your blood sugar in a safe range for your own comfort and well-being.

RanDee:

Fantastic. Anything else to add about either the foods that we have on this table or where people might be able to find more support?

Kacey:

You can definitely check us out on our Facebook page or our Central Oregon Type 2 Diabetes Support Page on Facebook and our website under our Diabetes Month tab, where we have several recipes and more information.

RanDee:

Perfect. Well, thank you so much, Kacey, for sharing your expertise, and for everyone out there, thanks for watching.

Kacey:

Thanks for joining us. Enjoy your Thanksgiving.