

Healthy Diwali

For community members

Eating well with diabetes:

Diwali (or Deepavali) is an important festival for Hindus. Diwali is a time for celebrating with family and indulging in rich foods, especially *mithai* (sweets). However, the **sweet and rich foods** eaten at this time can cause problems for people with **diabetes**.

Diabetes is a **chronic disease** in which the body doesn't produce or properly use insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas that changes glucose from food into energy. This leads to raised blood glucose levels which may damage various organs and tissues over time.

Type 1 diabetes occurs when the pancreas doesn't produce insulin. **Type 2 diabetes** occurs when the pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin, or insulin does not work effectively.

Gestational diabetes can occur during pregnancy, and usually goes away after the baby is born.

In 2009-10, 7% of the ACT population was diagnosed with diabetes or high blood glucose. However, for every person diagnosed with diabetes in the community there is probably one undiagnosed person, so around **13% of people in the ACT** might have diabetes.

People with diabetes may have different **physical responses** to eating more sweet and rich foods. This depends on the type of diabetes and how it is usually managed (e.g., with insulin, other medicines such as metformin, or diet).

It is important to keep blood glucose levels in a normal range to **stay healthy** during Diwali and beyond.

Some people with diabetes can **reduce their risk of problems** during Diwali by making **small changes** to their usual practices, such as:

- eating a small healthy snack before festivities begin;
- smaller portions of sweets; or
- extra exercise, like walking or dancing.

Before Diwali begins, people with diabetes should speak to their usual health professional/s about their plans.

You may need to change your diabetes medicine or eating and exercise plan.

If you have diabetes and feel unwell during Diwali, **contact your general practitioner (GP)** or the emergency department of your nearest hospital.

Staying safe:

Fireworks and crackers are not available in the ACT without a permit. It is important to **be careful around candles, sparklers and other flames**, especially with small children. **If a burn occurs, hold the burn under cold (not iced) running water for 20 minutes**, and do not apply creams or ointments. If you continue to be concerned about the burn, **contact your GP**. For serious burns, visit the emergency department of your nearest hospital.

शुभ दीवाली! Happy Diwali!



Interpreter

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) provides interpreting services in over 160 languages. Interpreters are available on-site or by telephone by phoning **131 450**.



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