

# Hindu Celebrations & Type 1 Diabetes



There are many celebrations in the Hindu festival calendar including the harvest season, for the victory of good over evil, festival of lights, colours, and lots more!



These festivals are celebrated with traditional foods such as ladoos, rasgullas and kachoris, which can be high in sugar.

These foods can still be enjoyed in moderation. It is important to remember to eat well and stay active, as this will help you to manage blood glucose levels.

## Maha Navratri

Maha Navratri is a nine-day Hindu festival celebrated in the autumn every year to celebrate the victory of good over evil. There is a lot of dancing and singing in preparation for winter.



## Diwali

Diwali is known as the festival of lights and is the Hindu new year. Diwali is a great time to get together with friends and family and enjoy delicious foods.



## Onam

Onam is an annual cultural festival in Kerala and celebrated all over the world. Onam is known for its vegetarian feast (Sadhya) which is rich in carbohydrates and fats, with lots of rice and different types of kheer.



## Fasts are observed by Hindus

Fasting can take place in a number of hindu celebrations including:

Hoi Ashtami  
Karva Chauth  
Guru Purnima

Navratras  
(Twice A Year)

### Monthly Fasts:

Ekadashi  
Pradosha  
Purnima

Most Hindu fasting periods extend from dawn to moon-rise or from dawn to star-rise.

## Risks Associated With Fasting

**!** If considering fasting, please consult your diabetes team. You might be exempted from the fast, or your management of the fast might be different because of diabetes. **!**

Long periods of time with little food or insulin can result in ketones in the blood. People with T1 diabetes should monitor blood ketones if glucose readings are more than 14mmol/L.

During festival season, it can be difficult to moderate your intake of the celebration foods on offer, which may lead to high glucose levels.



Eating lots of high-fat, high-carbohydrate foods, after completion of the fasting period, may cause peaks of hyperglycaemia and a rise in blood glucose for longer periods.

## How To Fast Safely When You Have Diabetes

Fasting can increase the risk of hypoglycaemia. People using insulin are most at risk of hypoglycaemia. Check glucose regularly during the fast.



Checking glucose levels can prevent hypo episodes and keep you safe if you decide to fast.



Treat the hypo if your glucose is below 3.9mmol/L.

An explanation of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia, hypoglycaemia awareness and advice on the management of hypoglycaemia can be found [here](#).



Learn about the carbohydrate content of traditional foods eaten during the festival period.

Have slow absorbing foods (which have low glycaemic index) before you begin fasting. Choosing these types of foods will keep you filled up and keep your blood glucose levels more even during the fast.

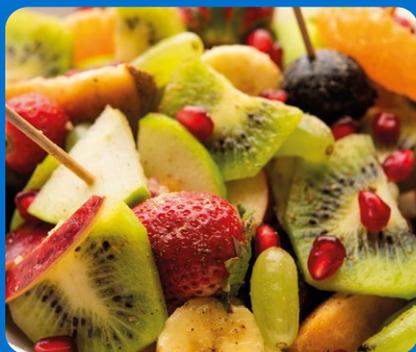
Use artificial sweeteners or stevia for sweetening instead of sugar in traditional desserts.

When it comes to sweets such as kheer, halwa or prashaad, portion size should be reduced.



Drink plenty of water and sugar-free drinks throughout the evening.

Instead of deep fried foods such as gulab jamun, malpua, chakri, murukku, opt for baked samosa, grilled veg, fruits and unsalted nuts.



Reduce snacks which are high calorie, such as samosas or poppadoms, Instead go for roasted almonds, walnuts, and hazelnuts. Add less sugar and replace with more nuts in your desserts.



## Activity And Lifestyle During Festive Periods

Children and young people should aim to be active for at least 60 minutes every day, including during festival periods. This will also help to reduce glucose levels and help insulin to work better.

**60  
min+**

Why not think about a short walk before or after the celebrations to manage your blood glucose and those extra treats.

Music and dance are huge during Diwali, and dancing is another way to incorporate more activity into your holiday celebrations, while still enjoying the holiday spirit.

Sleeping well is very important for general health as well as being able to concentrate when you need to focus on prayers.