

# LEAVE *my* diabetes ALONE

By Janis Roszler, RD, CDE, LD/N

It can be fun to get together with friends and family—until someone makes a negative comment about your diabetes.

Many people feel it is OK to comment on how you handle your diabetes. However, their words can sting sometimes, like when you reach for a cookie from a tray at an office party and a coworker asks, “you aren’t allowed to eat cookies, are you?” Here are a few ways to deal with comments people make or unwanted tips they offer.

## THINK AHEAD

If your mother-in-law always comments on how much weight you’ve gained, expect her to say something about your weight at the next family event. Before you leave home, decide how you’d like to handle this. You can ignore her comment, thank her for her interest and move away or change the subject. However you respond, hearing her will be much easier if you are prepared. You can then answer calmly and not become frazzled or upset.

## KEEP A PRETEND SCORECARD

This can help take the sting out when you get hurtful comments. The goal is to turn insulting remarks into a game that you play during your visit. Create a list of comments you expect to hear from the folks who may

be there. When anyone says a phrase on your list, give yourself a point. To add to the fun, enlist the support of a friend. When the comments start flying, report them to your friend and share a prize if you check off all the barbs on your list.

## CALL THE HOST AHEAD OF TIME

Many negative comments come during meal times. So before any party, contact the host and review the menu. If nothing meets your diabetes needs, either eat before you attend or bring a diabetes-friendly entrée that everyone can enjoy.

## HOST THE PARTY

When the event is at your home, you control the evening. You can plan the menu to suit your health needs and showcase the foods you prefer to eat. If they are willing, suggest that your guests each bring a diabetes-friendly dish to the meal. You can suggest recipes or direct them to appropriate cookbooks. This will be a potluck, healthy meal for you and all of your guests.

## 4 diabetes conversation strategies:

- 1. CHANGE THE SUBJECT** “Thanks for the idea. So how was your trip to the city?”
- 2. ACCEPT THEIR TIP** “Really? I’ll mention that to my doctor.”
- 3. TEACH THEM SOMETHING NEW** “Your husband was never allowed to eat this? Well, diabetic meal plans have changed a lot over the past few years.”
- 4. JUST SAY THANKS** “Thank you for your concern. I’ll keep it in mind.”

