

# Celebrating the Condiment

## TOP OFF YOUR HOLIDAY FOODS WITH A SMART, HEALTHY CHOICE

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Flavorful, spirited, zesty—condiments can make even the most basic food seem dressed up. Whether a spread, powder or garnish, a condiment tends to improve the flavor of food and give it “zing.” During the holidays, a wealth of condiments fill the party tables of friends and family in the form of chutneys, relishes, cocktail sauce, horseradish, lemon juice and a variety of flavored mustards.

It is important to monitor how much of these temptations are consumed, particularly during the festive holiday season. Many condiments in specified amounts qualify as a “free” food—a free food has less than 20 calories, fewer than five grams of carbohydrates and can be consumed without causing a significant effect on blood glucose levels. A common problem with condiments is that they are eaten in excess—and not all condiments qualify as a free food.

It is essential to pay close attention to the portion size and the nutrition facts on the label of any condiment. For example, one tablespoon of a vegetable relish (20 calories and four grams of carbohydrates) is considered a “free” food, but one-half of a cup of this same relish (160 calories and 32 grams of carbohydrates) is equal to two carbohydrate choices on a meal plan.

Convert the total amount of carbohydrates stated on a food label to the carbohydrate choices on a meal plan using this guide:

CARBOHYDRATES CARBOHYDRATE CHOICES 1 to 5 grams 6 to 10 grams 11 to 20 grams 21 to 25 grams 26 to 35 grams 0 1/2 1 1 1/2 2

Enjoy yourself this holiday season, but make sure to give an extra dash of care by measuring your condiments! A little extra attention to nutritional details will help keep the holidays festive and healthy.