



THE ANTI-DIET, BOPO GUIDE TO

# *Navigating the Holidays with PCOS*

Simple tips to beat stress, manage your  
symptoms, and enjoy your favorite  
holiday foods!

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## Let's be real... holidays can be HARD!

There are plenty of reasons why PCOS is more challenging to manage at this time of the year; sleep, stress, physical activity, and nutrition are all important in symptom management, and can all be thrown off-course in the wake of holiday planning, shopping, and gatherings.

Most of us also have friends or family who just can't seem to steer clear of diet culture talk... the added stress of anticipating or experiencing these conversations is a real struggle. And if you're TTC or dealing with infertility, the questions and comments around starting a family can also be really difficult.

This resource has been created with love, offering some straightforward tips to help reduce holiday stress and keep your symptoms in check this season.

## Shutting down Toxic Conversations

- **Dreading those questions and comments from family/friends** about weight, dieting, or family planning? Come up with a game plan in advance to limit your exposure to any unwanted conversations.
- Check out [these witty and effective](#) ideas for responding to diet talk, authored by the wonderfully wise anonymous writer "My Fat Friend." I like using "I'm on a diet from diets. Let's talk about something else. Do you have any fun adventures planned for the new year?"
- Be mindful of your own diet/weight talk and thoughts. Discuss food in the context of the enjoyment it brings you, whether it's for flavour or perhaps nostalgia, and don't engage in conversations about the bodies of others. Have self-compassion if you catch yourself thinking negatively about your food choices or your body, and read up on [more ideas for dealing with the "Holiday Food Police"](#) from Dietitian and Certified Intuitive Eating Counselor, Vincci Tsui.
- If you're struggling with infertility or are TTC, consider the boundaries for what you're comfortable sharing and with whom. If you have a partner, be sure you're on the same page about what and how much to disclose for these conversations. Come up with a response to "When are you having a baby?" that feels right for you. (Do you want to use humour? "Well, not for at least another 9 months!" Gracefully dance around the question? "When I know, you'll know!" Educate on why these personal questions add pressure to an already-challenging situation? "I'd rather not go into details, but this is something I'm struggling with. Infertility is a lot more common than you might think, so it's probably best to avoid asking unless the person in question brings it up.") It's a personal choice, but also okay to state that you'd prefer to talk about something else.
- Prepping for how you'll manage difficult conversations can help ease your stress, which will indirectly improve your sleep, nutrition, and self-care routines.

## Prioritize your Rest

Sleep is **such** an important part of PCOS self-care, since getting enough quality sleep influences our hormones. Create or maintain a healthy sleep routine, and listen to your body's rest/recovery needs. It's okay to say no to more commitments or gatherings than you're comfortable keeping in your calendar.

- Make room for really meaningful commitments, and politely decline others (even if the only other thing you've got "scheduled" is some down-time).
- Limit alcohol intake before bed, since it disturbs your quality of sleep.
- Create a screen-free and relaxing bedtime routine.
- Find a stress-reducing physical activity that you enjoy, and schedule it into your calendar. Exercise is a natural remedy for sleep issues, so choose movement that feels right for you.

## Avoid Skipping Meals or Meds

It might be tempting to skip a meal (or two) on the day of a big holiday meal, or you might find yourself so busy with holiday preparations that you inadvertently forget to eat a meal on time. This can wreak havoc on your blood sugars, hunger levels, and put you in a position that makes balanced food choices more difficult.

Make it a priority to eat regularly; incorporating protein and fibre (two important nutrients in PCOS management) can help to keep your appetite in check, and reduce feeling out of control with food later in the day. Similarly, don't reduce your carb intake earlier in the day to "save up" - eat as you normally would to best manage your appetite and feel satisfied after eating.

When you're on vacation, or out of your usual routines for the holidays, it can also be easy to accidentally miss a dose of medication or supplements. Try setting an alarm or reminder on your phone to take these as usual, since your typical daily cues to remind you may be absent.

## Enjoy your Favourite Holiday Foods

Food isn't simply fuel. It's not inherently "good" or "bad" based on its sugar or fat content, and many foods are meant to be savoured and enjoyed for flavour alone. Holiday favourites play an important role in our lives, help us to connect with our loved ones, and can even serve as a tribute to generations past. Listen to your body to help guide when, what, and how much of various foods you eat to feel both emotionally and physically satisfied. Shed the guilt, and give yourself unconditional permission to eat without having to count calories, restrict your food the following day, or do a certain amount of exercise to make up for what you ate. Having PCOS does not mean you need to give yourself strict limits around the foods you love: restricting foods will only further fuel your cravings!

Wishing you a wonderful season filled with meaningful connections and self-care. For more tips and guidance on PCOS nutrition, follow me on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#). Check out my [website](#) to book with me for one-on-one consultations.