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# Flexitarian Goes A-List

## Hollywood's Mostly Plant-Based Movement

Some celebrities go vegan overnight, while others ease in. That second group has been getting bigger lately, with more stars calling themselves flexitarians: those who eat a **mostly** plant-based diet.

The reasons for the shift vary. Some think about the environment, while others focus on health or animal welfare. For Kevin Hart, it started as a way to feel better. He's now an investor in Beyond Meat, runs a vegan fast-food chain, and still discusses the benefits. Kim Kardashian says eating mostly plant-based meals helps her manage psoriasis, and she's known to keep vegan tacos in her meal rotation.

Harry Styles is a pescatarian and has skipped meat since 2020. He once famously turned down a chicken nugget a fan offered at a concert, tossing it back and telling the crowd he doesn't eat meat. Cardi B has thought about it, too, especially to help her digestion, but admits giving up meat is hard.

Leonardo DiCaprio, a longtime proponent of environmental causes, invests in plant-based companies to promote sustainability, although he hasn't fully committed to veganism. Serena Williams goes vegan during tennis season to train

alongside her sister Venus, who's been eating a vegan diet for years. Chris Hemsworth once went vegan while filming a Marvel movie and found he could keep his muscle mass without steak.

Some have made plant-based eating a side project. Drew Barrymore became the "Chief Mom Officer" for Quorn. Katy Perry says she's almost completely vegan, and her former partner, Orlando Bloom, is mostly there, too. Idris Elba and Clint Eastwood have promoted plant-based food for health and environmental reasons, while Snoop Dogg has been a big public supporter of vegan brands.

Flexitarian or not, these choices make a difference. Cutting back on meat lowers your carbon footprint and can improve your health. It's also a way to support a growing movement without going cold turkey. And if Hollywood's most meat-loving action stars and pop icons can trade a steak for tofu now and then, maybe the rest of us can, too.



# SUGAR, SMILES, AND SANITY

## How a Healthy Smile (and Stress Levels) Can Help Manage Diabetes

November is here, and with it comes the swirl of holiday meals, family gatherings, and yes ... sugar. As a dentist, November is one of my favorite months, not just because of Thanksgiving pies (I'm only human!), but because it's **National Diabetes Month**, a perfect time to talk about how your **oral health and diabetes are deeply connected**. Plus, with **Loosen Up, Lighten Up Day** on Nov. 14, it's a great reminder to protect your health and your happiness during what can be the busiest (and most stressful) season of the year.

So, grab a cup of tea, relax for a moment, and let me share some simple but powerful ways to protect your smile, your health, and maybe even your sanity this holiday season.

**The Diabetes-Dental Health Connection**  
Here's something many people don't realize: Diabetes and gum disease have a "two-way street" relationship.

- **Diabetes makes gum disease worse** because high blood sugar fuels inflammation.
- **Gum disease makes diabetes harder to control** because inflammation in your mouth can actually spike blood sugar levels.

I've had patients referred to me by endocrinologists because their blood sugar levels were suddenly out of control. After treating the gum disease they didn't even realize they had, their blood sugar stabilized. It's that powerful.

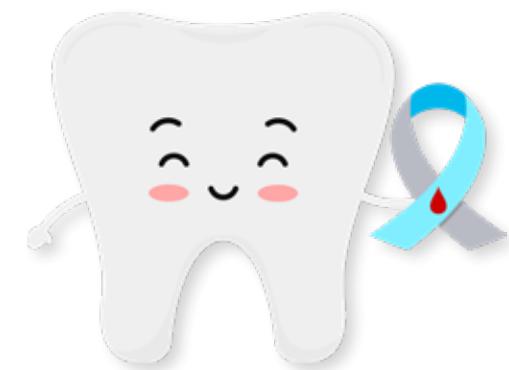
**Loosen Up, Lighten Up!**  
Nov. 14 is Loosen Up, Lighten Up Day, a perfect excuse to laugh, relax, and remember not to take life (or the holidays) too seriously. In fact, laughter

So, this holiday season, as you enjoy mashed potatoes, pies, and Grandma's famous stuffing, remember: **Your smile isn't just about looks; it's a key player in your overall health.**

### My Top Holiday Tips for a Healthy Smile (and Blood Sugar!)

Over the years, I've learned some simple strategies that make a huge difference:

- Use an electric toothbrush with ultrasonic vibrations: This isn't just about getting your teeth "extra clean." The ultrasonic action reaches below the gumline, where a regular toothbrush can't, reducing the risk of inflammation and cavities.
- Eat in the correct order: A trick I learned using a continuous glucose monitor (CGM):
  - Start with **fiber-rich veggies**
  - Add **healthy fats and protein**
  - Save **carbs and sweets for last**
  - This simple shift can dramatically reduce blood sugar spikes.
- **Stay hydrated:** Swishing with water after meals helps remove sugars and food particles before they settle in.
- **Don't skimp on sleep:** Poor sleep raises inflammation, blood sugar levels, and stress. Even a quick 15-minute nap can help when nights get busy.



itself reduces inflammation and supports better health.

That's why our team has been busy creating fun TikTok and Instagram videos; a good laugh is great for your health, and sometimes, you just need to see your dental team dancing in elf hats to feel better about life.

**Follow us on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook for lighthearted moments all season long!**

### A Holiday Gift for Your Smile

This year, we're offering special holiday bundles with ultrasonic toothbrushes, whitening kits, and more, beautifully wrapped and ready to gift to your loved ones (or yourself!). It's a thoughtful way to give the gift of health and take one more thing off your holiday to-do list.

To your great smiles and better health,



# WAVE GOODBYE TO FLABBY ARMS

## A Fun Formula for Leaner Limbs

Are you ready to wave goodbye to stubborn flabby arms? Your metabolism slows down as you age, making it harder to keep muscles in shape, but toning and strengthening your arms helps with everyday tasks and can boost your confidence and well-being. With the right moves, properly sized weights, and a solid workout plan, you can see real changes in how your arms look and feel. Get ready to flex your way to fitness with these tips for leaner limbs.

### Start Light, Lift Right

Adding arm workouts to your workout, such as lifting light weights, will help build muscle and reduce overall body fat, leading to a more toned and defined appearance. But you could do more harm than good if you choose dumbbells that are too heavy for you. The right size depends

on your upper-body strength, but if you are unsure or a beginner, grab the lowest weights available and work your way up. A set of 4-pound weights is a great place to start for bicep curls or shoulder exercises.

### Dance, Dip, Repeat

Losing overall body weight will ultimately help you slim down your arms, so it's essential to include a variety of exercises in your routine. Along with weighted moves, like lateral raises and triceps extensions, incorporate regular cardio into your week. Activities like biking, running, dancing, and swimming help elevate the heart rate to burn calories. Aim for at least 150-300 minutes of moderate intensity exercise weekly. If you work on your arms at least three days a week, giving yourself 1-2 rest days between each, you can see results in just six weeks.



### Feed Your Muscles

Your health is multifaceted, and along with exercise, you should eat a healthy diet, stay hydrated, and get the proper amount of sleep. Drinking enough water can help you feel full longer, aiding in weight loss. Adding more fiber and protein to your diet can also keep your appetite under control and encourage muscle mass to stick around. Though you can't just snooze your way to slim arms, getting a full night of sleep is vital in regulating your appetite and supporting weight loss.

## The Truth About 'Negative-Calorie' Foods

### Why Carrots Won't Burn Fat (But Are Still Worth It)

Let's talk about a rumor that's been chewing its way through wellness circles for years: the idea that certain foods, like celery or lettuce, burn more calories to eat and digest than they contain. People like to call them "negative-calorie" foods. Eat enough of them, and voilà, you're burning calories by snacking. Sounds too good to be true, right? That's because it is.

While it might feel satisfying to think that munching on crunchy veggies is a secret fat-burning hack, science says otherwise. Every food has calories, even the ones that barely make a dent in your daily total. Chewing and digesting burn a small amount of energy, but not nearly enough to outweigh the calories found in even the lightest foods. Celery might be mostly water, but it still offers energy, not to mention potassium and fiber.

But here's where the real truth gets exciting: Just because foods like tomatoes, carrots, and leafy



greens don't defy the laws of biology doesn't mean they aren't nutritional powerhouses. They're hydrating, fiber-filled, and packed with essential vitamins and minerals. Carrots, for example, bring a hefty dose of beta-carotene, while tomatoes deliver vitamin C and disease-fighting carotenoids.

Instead of focusing on the calorie math, the better strategy is to build meals and snacks around these wholesome, naturally low-calorie foods. They're not magic, but they help you feel full and satisfied, leaving less room for the processed, calorie-heavy choices.

So, skip the gimmicks and enjoy these fruits and veggies for what they are: delicious, nourishing, and a smart part of any balanced plate. There may be no such thing as a "negative-calorie" food, but choosing vibrant, nutrient-rich options will always be a positive move for your health. After all, the best "diet" fuels your body, satisfies your taste buds, and makes you feel good from the inside out.

## Is Your Smartwatch Helping You Crush Goals ...

### OR CRUSHING YOUR MOTIVATION?

#### The Bottom Line

When they help, smartwatches turn workouts into engaging, measurable achievements. They can nudge you off the couch, track your progress, and offer health insights beyond exercise, like sleep or stress. On the other hand, they can trigger feelings of failure, promote unhealthy comparisons, or lead users to fixate more on screens than sensations.

#### Tips for Using Your Smartwatch Wisely

- Set personal goals rather than chasing generic benchmarks, and create alerts that feel supportive, not punishing.
- Check data context and observe trends over time rather than obsess over daily ups and downs.
- Measure impact by asking, "Does this encourage me to be more active and feel proud?" If it's more stress than it's worth, consider stepping back.
- Protect your data, review privacy settings, and research how your device handles health information.

You strap on your smartwatch before every workout, trusting it to track your heart rate, count your steps, and celebrate your calories burned. But here's the catch: Is it actually helping or silently sabotaging your fitness efforts?

#### The Case for Smartwatches as Workout Allies

First, smartwatches can be powerful motivators. A broad review of fitness-tracker studies found that using them generally boosts motivation and increases physical activity, especially among people who are already inclined to exercise. Features like step goals, alerts to move, badges, and challenges create a sense of structure and accountability that can turn daily movement into a game.

These wearables also offer real-time physiological feedback. Reliable heart-rate sensing (especially during steady cardio), GPS tracking for

distance, and even sleep analysis give you the data to fine-tune workouts and recovery habits.

#### Where Smartwatches Can Backfire

For some, the numbers can become a source of stress. If the daily totals fall short or your progress plateaus, it's easy to feel discouraged, anxious, or even unmotivated. And for older adults or users less passionate about exercise, this pressure sometimes leads them to ditch the device entirely.

Plus, accuracy issues can skew the data. Optical sensors may misread heart rate during fast or uneven motion. One study flagged error-prone heart-rate variability readings, especially during movement, though newer algorithms can help correct this. Moreover, privacy can be a potential concern. Many devices collect sensitive health data, which is often stored in the cloud and may be shared or misused without complete transparency.

## Slow Cooker Brisket

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (1-oz) envelope onion soup mix
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 3-lb piece of beef brisket (flat cut)
- 8 fresh thyme sprigs
- 8 whole garlic cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lb carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 lb baby golden potatoes
- 3 celery stalks, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large sweet onion, cut into 8 wedges
- 2 1/2 cups beef stock
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbsp cornstarch

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, combine soup mix, sugar, salt, and pepper. Sprinkle over brisket.
2. Place meat, fat cap side down, into an 8-qt slow cooker.
3. Top brisket with thyme, garlic, bay leaves, carrots, potatoes, celery, and onion.
4. Whisk stock, Worcestershire sauce, and cornstarch until fully dissolved. Add to slow cooker.
5. Cover and cook on high for 5-6 hours until tender.
6. Remove to a cutting board, fat side up. Remove thyme and bay leaves.
7. Thinly slice brisket against the grain.
8. Serve with vegetables, drizzled with gravy from the slow cooker.

Inspired by ThePioneerWoman.com

## TAKE A BREAK!

**When something's rad, but not too rad ...**



**Something's up**



**The farmer just unfriended me on Facebook**