



Module 4, Vignette 1, Overcoming Cultural/Family Dietary Issues

Katie Whitmire, NP-c, BC-ADM, CDCES and one of her patients

Ms Whitmire: So what are some struggles you've been having in maintaining a healthy diet?

Patient: I think one of my biggest struggles is my family: we have a lot of get togethers and we eat a lot of very traditional Hawaiian foods, which tend to make my sugars go really high. And I don't want to bring something different and offend anybody, but I still want to be able to eat the things that I'm used to and have grown up eating.

Ms Whitmire: Yeah, totally makes sense. So, I definitely don't want you to deprive yourself. I don't want you to feel like you can't have the things that you like because that just wouldn't be sustainable for the long term, right? I want you to implement changes that you feel like are easy and that you can do for the long term.

So, what I generally suggest for patients to do at big family gatherings is to implement what I call the plate diet. So, if you're looking at a plate, you want at least half of your plate to be nonstarchy vegetables. So usually at a family gathering, you're going to have at least one salad option or green beans, Brussel sprouts, something like that. So, you want half your plate to be those nonstarchy vegetables that are going to fill you up, give you a lot of fiber but aren't going to raise your blood sugar. So that's half your plate.

Patient: Okay.

Ms Whitmire: Then you want a fourth of your plate to be a lean protein, so something like chicken, fish, turkey; some sort of option like that. Whatever they have there, you want that to be a fourth of your plate. Again, something that's going to fill you up, give you a lot of nutrition but isn't going to raise your blood sugar.

And then the other fourth of your plate can be whatever you want. So, it can be those high-carb options, the macaroni salad or the rice or whatever your family typically has. We're just reducing the portion so that your blood sugar isn't going to rise as high. So, whether you want to do multiple small portions of different things at the gathering or there's one thing that you like in particular, that can take up a fourth of your plate.

So, then you're filling up your whole plate. I don't even think anyone in your family would notice that you're doing anything different 'cause you've still got a full plate of food, you're not making a big deal out of it, but then you're going to leave and your blood sugar's not going to be sky high; you're still going to be satisfied. Does that seem like something you could do?

Patient: Yeah, that makes sense. I think I can try that.

Ms Whitmire: Great.