

Healthy Thanksgiving

It is easier than you think to have a happy, healthy Thanksgiving! Here are some simple tips on planning a healthier meal, safe food preparation and storage, as well as adding some fun activities to your day.

10 ways to make the feast good for you

1. Start small: When it comes to Thanksgiving, the biggest concern is not just WHAT you are eating, but HOW MUCH of it you are eating. Aim to have small portions of those high-calorie foods such as casseroles and desserts while filling up on lighter fare such as vegetables and lean turkey.

2. Talk turkey: Turkey is a great source of lean protein and is healthiest if you skip the skin and go for the white meat. If you prefer the dark meat, mix and match in order to get a little extra flavor without adding too much fat.

3. Veg out: Fall veggies such as squash and green beans are great side dishes that can add color and variety to the meal without adding too many extra calories.

4. Be sweet: Sweet potatoes are a source of vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium and fiber that can make a tasty side dish or dessert. A healthy way to cook them is to cut them in half, sprinkle with orange juice and a little brown sugar, and pop them into the oven.

5. Kick the canned: Cranberries are packed with antioxidants that can help keep you healthy. Unfortunately, canned cranberry sauce is often also packed with sugar and calories you don't need. Try making your own by mashing fresh cranberries with juice from an orange and a generous splash of apple juice concentrate.

6. Pick a pumpkin: Pumpkin isn't just tasty. It's a great choice that is high in dietary fiber, low in fat and calories, and loaded with potassium, vitamin A and

vitamin C. Make pumpkin pies with canned, evaporated fat-free milk, half the amount of sugar in the recipe, a graham cracker crust and light or fat-free whipped topping for a light and tasty dessert.

7. Stuff with veggies: Opt for less bread in your stuffing and add more onions, celery, vegetables or fresh fruits such as pears or apples to make a lower-calorie version of the old standby. Try using whole wheat bread to make it an even healthier option.

8. Go fruity: Baked apples or poached pears are perfect, light ways to end any autumn meal. If you're making a pie, try to use whole wheat flour in place of white flour.

9. Sacrifice fat, not flavor: Skim the fat from the juices when you're making your gravy. Use low fat buttermilk or low-sodium chicken stock in place of cream or whole milk in dishes like mashed potatoes, whipped sweet potatoes or butternut squash. You'll achieve a creamy consistency and loads of flavor, minus the unnecessary fat and calories.

10. Steam and mash: Try sneaking in more low-calorie vegetables by mashing or pureeing steamed or boiled cauliflower with low fat milk. It's a flavorful substitute for mashed potatoes and can help balance an otherwise potato-rich meal!

Source: American Heart Association and mygloss.com

Visit ShapeYourFutureOK.com for more healthy Thanksgiving food tips and recipes.

Thanksgiving Food Safety

Turkey Tips

Buying

Fresh Turkey: Buy only 1-2 days before cooking. Do not buy a pre-stuffed fresh turkey.

Frozen Turkey: Buy any time, make sure you have enough storage space in your freezer.

Thawing

In the refrigerator: Place frozen bird in original wrapper in the refrigerator (40°F or below). Allow approximately 24 hours per 4 to 5 pounds of turkey. A thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for 1-2 days.

In cold water: If you forget to thaw the turkey or don't have room in the refrigerator for thawing, don't panic. You can submerge the turkey in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes. Allow about 30 minutes defrosting time per pound of turkey. Cook immediately after thawing.

In the microwave: Microwave thawing is safe if the turkey is not too large. Check the manufacturer's instructions for the size turkey that will fit into your oven, the minutes per pound, and the power level to use for thawing. Cook immediately after thawing.

Thanksgiving Day

If you choose to stuff your turkey, stuff loosely. The stuffing should be moist, not dry, since heat destroys bacteria more rapidly in a moist environment. Place stuffed turkey in oven immediately. You may also cook the stuffing outside the bird in a casserole.

Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the turkey. A whole turkey is safe when cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F throughout the bird. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast.

All turkey meat, including any that remains pink, is safe to eat as soon as all parts reach at least 165°F. The stuffing should reach 165°F, whether cooked inside the bird or in a separate dish. When turkey is removed from the oven, let it stand 20 minutes. Remove stuffing and carve turkey.

Storing Leftovers

Cut the turkey into small pieces; refrigerate stuffing and turkey separately in shallow containers within 2 hours of cooking. Use leftover turkey and stuffing within 3-4 days or freeze these foods. Reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165°F or until hot and steaming.

Thanksgiving can be about more than just a meal.

Add some activity to your day:

- 1) Plan a long walk, enjoy the fall colors and talk about what you and your family are thankful for this year.
- 2) Get up and get moving at halftime - with a quick game of family flag football.
- 3) Organize a neighborhood clean-up activity.
- 4) Take the family along to help prepare or serve a meal for those in need in your community.
- 5) Make plans to visit a hospital or nursing home - share your time with someone who might otherwise be alone.

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