

## **Tips for a Guilt-Free Thanksgiving**

Thanksgiving is a holiday centered around people coming together to eat. Special dishes are made for this once a year feast (plus the week of leftovers) and you come away more stuffed than the turkey. However, you can savor the holiday and those traditional treats, guilt-free, without worrying about excess weight gain.



### **Pick Portions Wisely**

Part of the Thanksgiving holiday charm is feasting your eyes on the bountiful array of food. However, if you're opting to eat mindfully, refrain from filling your plate blindly at the table. Instead, give the full menu a good look and pick and choose what you're going to indulge in. Eating wise at a holiday meal shouldn't be about restriction. You can focus your calories on reasonably-sized portions of your holiday favorites. Small portions means eating what you will really enjoy.

### **Take Time and Really Savor**

Pace yourself during your holiday smorgasbord. Take the time to select small portions of your Thanksgiving favorites and relish them slowly by really tasting what you're eating. You can do this by putting your fork down between bites, and thoroughly chewing every mouthful.



### **Spread Out the Bounty**

Many families gather for Thanksgiving dinner at a set time. Well who says you can't pioneer a new, healthy holiday tradition by spreading the food out throughout the day. Try breaking your feast into appetizers, main course, and desserts. Use the breaks between courses to do other family things, like taking a walk, making a craft with the kids or playing games. That means you get more time with your loved ones and spreading out the Thanksgiving bounty gives everyone time to digest.

For blended families that have more than one home to visit, approach your day as a progressive dinner, eating a different course at each house. Try to arrange staggered times so you can spend relaxed time with each family before moving to the next.

## **Use Fresh Wholesome Ingredients**

Your dishes will taste their best when you're able to use fresh, good quality ingredients, including your flour and spices. Spices can lose their potency over time. If your spices have been on the shelf 3 or more years, it may be time to replace them. If you like a spreadable butter, consider using one of the real butters mixed with a vegetable oil. Take a few minutes to grate real cheese for your sauces and toppings instead of using processed cheese foods.

## **Focus on Family above Presentation**

During a holiday, like Thanksgiving, it's easy to get caught up in things like the perfect table settings and centerpieces and the impressive display of food in special dishes only brought out this time of year. It's hard to deny that the food tends to be the delicious focus, but don't let that overshadow the gathering of family and friends.



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### **Be Thankful for more than the food.**

Holidays are the perfect time to feel gratitude for the important people in your life. So take some of the focus off food and put some back on what really matters most: family and friends spending quality time together. Share the bounty, but more importantly, share the love.

## **Don't be so Hard on Yourself**

Holidays are tough if you're trying to maintain weight, let alone lose weight. Thanksgiving is a time of celebration, which typically features rich dishes and tempting desserts. So go easy on yourself. Put your restrictions on hold for the holiday and focus on healthy weight maintenance through small portions of all your favorites.

Top that off with the chaos of getting everything else done while planning a holiday and it's easy to let the stress become overwhelming. Be sure to fit in at least a few moments of relaxation and your own private prayers of thanksgiving.

**Provided by Community of Christ Health Ministries Association**



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