

10 Tips for a Healthy Thanksgiving Holiday

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Thanksgiving only comes around once a year, so why not go ahead and splurge? Because year after year, most of us pack on at least a pound (some gain more) during the holidays . and keep the extra weight on permanently. But Thanksgiving doesn't have to sabotage your weight. With a little know-how, you can satisfy your desire for traditional favorites and still enjoy a guilt-free Thanksgiving feast!

- 1. Get Active.** "Eat less and exercise more' is the winning formula to prevent weight gain during the holidays," says Connie Diekman, president-elect of the American Dietetic Association (ADA). "Increase your steps or lengthen your fitness routine the weeks ahead and especially the day of the feast." *Tip: Make fitness a family adventure! Get everyone together to take a walk early in the day and then again after dinner.*
- 2. Eat Breakfast.** While you might think it makes sense to save up calories for the big meal, experts say eating a small meal in the morning can give you more control over your appetite. *Tip: Try a small but satisfying breakfast -- such as an egg with a slice of whole-wheat toast or a bowl of whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk -- so you won't be starving when you arrive at the gathering.*
- 3. Lighten Up.** Whether you are hosting Thanksgiving dinner or bringing a few dishes to share, make your recipes healthier with less fat, sugar, and calories. *Tip: Use fat-free chicken broth to baste the turkey and make gravy; reduce sugar or use sugar substitutes; reduce oil and butter wherever you can -- use apple sauce or fruit purees instead of oil in baked goods; try plain yogurt or fat-free sour cream in creamy dips, mashed potatoes, and casseroles.*
- 4. Police Your Portions.** Before you fill your plate, survey the table and decide what you're going to choose. Then select reasonable-sized portions of foods you cannot live without. *Tip: "Don't waste your calories on foods that you can have all year long," suggests Diekman. "Fill your plate with small portions of holiday favorites that only come around once a year."*
- 5. Skip the Seconds.** Try to resist the temptation to go back for second helpings. *Tip: "If you limit yourself to one plate, you are less likely to overeat and have more room for a delectable dessert," Diekman says.*
- 6. Choose the Best Bets on the Buffet.** While each of us has our own favorites, keep in mind that some holiday foods are better choices than others. *Tip: "White turkey meat, plain vegetables, roasted sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, defatted gravy, and pumpkin pie tend to be the best bets because they are lower in fat and calories," says Diekman.*
- 7. Slowly Savor.** Eating slowly, putting your fork down between bites, and tasting each mouthful is one of the easiest ways to enjoy your meal and feel satisfied with one plate full of food, experts say.
- 8. Go Easy on Alcohol.** Don't forget those alcohol calories that can add up quickly. *Tip: If you choose to drink alcohol, be sure to practice moderation and stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water!*
- 9. Be Realistic.** The holiday season is a time for celebration. *Tip: With busy schedules and so many extra temptations, this is a good time to strive for weight maintenance instead of weight loss.*
- 10. Focus on Family and Friends.** Thanksgiving is not just about the delicious bounty of food. It's a time to celebrate relationships with family and friends.



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