



Something to remember as Thanksgiving approaches is the true meaning of the holiday. It's about gathering with family and friends to recount our blessings. It's not only about the food! We all enjoy the traditional foods and some even like to try out new recipes. Consider making healthier versions of holiday foods (see websites below) or choose to make the family favorite recipes but limit yourself to a moderate portion. (When serving turkey visualize the size of your fist or a deck of cards and for side dishes visualize a tennis ball). It's **not** a good idea to make your Thanksgiving meal the only meal of the day as this generally results in overeating. (Sources have estimated the average total calorie and fat content of a traditional Thanksgiving at 3000 calories and 200 plus grams of fat—that's too much for a body to handle all at once!) Commit to eating one plate of food without going back for seconds or thirds. (The first helping always tastes the best anyway!) Focus on the special foods that you don't eat at other times of the year. Try to fill your plate with color from fruits and vegetables so you don't overdo the starches which are so prevalent in holiday meals. Consider serving a mixed green salad with veggies and a low calorie dressing for added nutrition and to help fill you up with fewer calories.

Check out these healthy Thanksgiving recipe ideas:

<http://www.myrecipes.com/recipes/gallery/0,28548,1683337,00.html>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/thanksgiving-recipes/NU00643>

http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/collections/thanksgiving_collection_1.html

Turkey is a healthy choice! Roasted turkey is high in protein and relatively low in fat (white meat is lower in fat and calorie content than dark meat). Basting your turkey with something other than butter or a fat source can keep it lean. Consider using broth or diluted juice (the purpose is to keep it moist). Your homemade gravy can be leaner as well if you do a good job of separating the fat out of the turkey drippings (there are various kitchen tools for doing this) or use a chicken or vegetable broth for the base of your gravy (40 calories for a half cup compared to 150 calories for same amount made from turkey drippings without the fat removed).

Don't forget the **cranberries!** No only do they add color to your plate but this holiday fruit should be consumed year round as cranberries are packed with dozens of different beneficial antioxidants that help to slow aging and fight disease. If you make your own cranberry sauce from whole berries, you can limit the sugar and get a tastier and less sugary sauce than what's in the can.

Green beans offer vitamin C, K and A and fiber and only 50 calories per half cup. Green bean casserole with fried onions and high fat cream soup is calorie dense (220 calories per half cup). Instead try sautéed green beans seasoned with herbs and a small amount of olive oil.

Sweet potatoes with a few added spices allow you to taste the natural sweetness and goodness—consider leaving out the brown sugar, butter and or marshmallows! Sweet potatoes are highly nutritious offering a great source of vitamin A (in form of beta-carotene), vitamin C and B6 and fiber. They are antioxidant-rich and anti-inflammatory as well. Without the extras they can help to stabilize blood sugar and lower insulin resistance. Consider adding sweet potatoes to your diet on a year round basis!

Pumpkin is an orange squash that is just plain good for you. It is low in fat and calories and loaded with potassium, vitamin A and vitamin C. Pumpkin pie is a healthier and less calorie dessert selection than pecan pie (180 calories per

slice vs. 480 calories per slice). By serving your pumpkin pie as a custard cup without the crust or substituting a graham cracker crust you can reduce the calories.

Drink plenty of **water** throughout the day and limit your intake of alcohol and other calorie containing beverages.

Be active!! Incorporate some activity into your Thanksgiving Day and weekend with a family walk or jog, game of Twister or another active game or dancing indoors!

There is no need to kick off the holiday season with a sense of resignation to overindulgence or entitlement to splurge. Think **moderation!** The key is to stay active, to eat moderate portions of the foods you enjoy the most and to focus on and enjoy the time spent with family and friends—it's truly about these relationships, giving thanks and the food is a side note!

Enjoy the holiday and your time off from work!

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