

Happy Healthy Thanksgiving!

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I love a delicious Thanksgiving meal. Doesn't everyone? From the roasted turkey to the stuffing to the trimmings, everything at the table is pretty irresistible. Thanksgiving is a combination of smorgasbord and a celebration of the goodness of food with family and friends.

Here's a bit of advice to help you enjoy your Thanksgiving meal in a healthy way.

Take Away The Stress

The Thanksgiving meal can be a lot of muss and fuss. A perfect comforting, nourishing and fulfilling meal makes it all worth it. But, the hours of preparation invites stress to the table. Why not de-stress by parcelling out the responsibilities for creating a fabulous meal? Ask your guests to each bring a dish for the meal and dessert. Then you only have the responsibility for making a moist and tasty turkey with gravy. Everything else simply gets warmed up for dinner while the turkey is "resting."

Serve the meal family style. Either have guests fill their plates in the kitchen or help themselves to their favorites at the dinner table. This will be less stressful and ensure that everyone's food is piping hot.

Uh oh. The troublesome uncle is at the table and can't help but share his controversial opinions. Now is the time to breathe. Or step away momentarily, or switch the subject to something more positive. I suggest having a few conversation starters up your sleeve for the occasion. The goal for the day is to keep the peace and stay at peace.

Many families have a lovely tradition of sharing what they are thankful for at the dinner table. This sets a beautiful tone for your Thanksgiving dinner. Always let guests know in advance that everyone who wishes will be invited to share so they are prepared and not caught off-guard. Again, let's make this stress-less. Alternatively, you can have small cards that you give to guests before dinner to write down why they are thankful. It's a fun and positive activity for everyone, including the kids.

Make Healthy Choices

An occasional food splurge doesn't have to be a problem. Thanksgiving is a time when you can allow yourself to eat more than your usual as long as you return to a healthy diet. After all, it's just a day (or two, with leftovers), and doesn't have to impact your overall health. That being said, we do encourage making some healthy choices throughout the day.

Our first recommendation is to add some vegetables to the mix. If you're a guest, and you don't expect much greenery at the table, bring the salad and a vegetable side. Try not to eat too many appetizers before the meal. In many families, Thanksgiving is a full day affair, so you have to be careful of how you approach the pre-dinner offerings or you'll be full before you hit the Thanksgiving table. I recommend making a large platter of vegetables with Greek yogurt dip.

One thing that we don't recommend is skipping breakfast on Thanksgiving Day. If you arrive at the Thanksgiving table starving, you'll likely make unhealthy choices. Have a healthy breakfast, drink lots of water and enjoy some tea until the big feast begins.

Another Thanksgiving Day trap is alcohol. Skip the high calorie beer and sugary cocktails if there are other options you also enjoy. Always have non-alcoholic beverages available. There are many options, from flavored seltzer water to iced tea to cider (with no added sugar). Drinking lots of water throughout the day is beneficial regardless of how much alcohol one consumes.

After dinner, take a break before eating dessert. This will help you better connect to what your body might want to cap off the meal! Take a walk. Listen to music. Sing. Play a game. Consider having dessert options available that are a little lighter, such as fresh fruit with Greek yogurt sweetened with honey.

The bottom line is to enjoy the day, enjoy the abundance, and be grateful for your friends and family. Happy Thanksgiving!

