

8 THANKSGIVING TIPS TO MAKE THE HOLIDAY HEALTHIER FOR YOUR HEART

Dreading getting through Thanksgiving without blowing your heart healthy eating plan? Here are eight Thanksgiving hacks that can help you stay heart healthy.

Originally dubbed a day of giving thanks and a retro throwback to the feast pilgrims and Native Americans shared together, today Thanksgiving has morphed into a holiday of gluttony. It's not only allowed, but expected that we will overindulge, over imbibe and overeat during this four day weekend food extravaganza. With turkey and trimmings, pumpkin pie and whipped cream, how can we survive this food holiday without completely heading off our heart healthy course?

Here are eight healthy Thanksgiving food hacks to help you make the holiday heart healthier:



HEALTHY TIP #1

SUBSTITUTE THE BUTTER & CREAM

You may not think it's a holiday without several heavy butter and cream dishes (think mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, creamed corn, rich soups and sauces) but you can swap butter in recipes with extra virgin olive oil, safflower oil and macadamia nut oil. For cream substitutes, try plain yogurt or a thick nut milk product.

HEALTHY TIP #2

EASE OFF THE SALT

Cut back salt in recipes by halving the amounts called for. You likely won't even notice. Try a squirt of lemon juice on vegetables to brighten the flavor or use a salt substitute product. Use reduced sodium chicken stock, or low salt broth to cook with, and look for reduced sodium labels in other products like prepared rice and gravy.



HEALTHY TIP #3

GO HEAVY ON THE VEGGIES

Not so much a Heart Healthy Hack but definitely great holiday advice. Instead of having just one vegetable side like green beans, why not go heavier on the vegetables? Think carrots, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, kale and turnips, which all make delicious Thanksgiving sides. Sure, have a little mashed potatoes and gravy but then go heavier on the root vegetables.

HEALTHY TIP #4

CHANGE UP THE SWEETS

Pie is a delightful Thanksgiving dessert, but why not caramelize a banana and apple with a little cinnamon and a drizzle of honey. It provides the same sweet, delicious satisfaction at a fraction of the fat and calories of several pieces of pumpkin or pecan pie.



HEALTHY TIP #5

KEEP THE SPLURGING TO ONE DAY

No, you needn't skip all your favorites but definitely keep the splurge to a minimum by containing it to one day, not the entire four day weekend.

HEALTHY TIP #6

CHOOSE WHITE MEAT

Choose white meat over dark. A slice of turkey breast has fewer calories and less fat than a slice of dark meat or a turkey leg. Skip the skin too — that's where the most fat is.



HEALTHY TIP #7

USE THE HOLIDAY TO MOVE

As much as the four day weekend may entice you to relax, don't flop on the couch and remain inclined all weekend. Get up, get outside, go for walks, hikes, toss a ball or take the dog out for a stroll to get in some much needed exercise over the holiday weekend. Even a jaunt of Black Friday shopping will enable you to walk around the mall.

HEALTHY TIP #8

LEAVE LEFTOVERS BEHIND

If you're lucky enough to be invited somewhere for dinner, don't be swayed into bringing home leftovers. Skipping them will ensure your splurge remains on Thanksgiving and Thanksgiving Day only. Practice politely declining.

