

## THANKSGIVING- DON'T GET STUFFED



<http://www.webweaver.nu/clipart/thanksgiving.shtml>

Thanksgiving is one of the most special holidays of the entire year. Historically, the holiday began in about 1621, when Native Americans and members of the new colony joined to celebrate the end of the harvest season. It was a time to give thanks for a safe journey and a bountiful harvest. In more recent times, it is generally a holiday for friends and family to gather and partake in festive foods and family traditions. It also signifies the official start of the holiday season- and a period of time for over-indulgence in food and drink. Along with the festivities come rich foods and beverages loaded with fat and calories. It is estimated that the average American will gain about 5-8 pounds just in the month from Thanksgiving to New Years. Many people do not lose the weight after the new year begins- that could be a problem.

**Below are some tips to avoid getting stuffed during the holidays:**

- Never go to a buffet hungry- drink a large cup of warm tea, eat a handful of almonds or carrot sticks, or drink a cup of warm broth before leaving the house
- Substitute fresh vegetables for chips, and avoid high calorie vegetable dips
- Load your plate up with vegetables and lean meat/fish- at least 2/3 of the plate should be filled with vegetables
- Choose fresh fruit instead of high calorie cake or cookies
- If you just can't resist chocolate- choose rich dark chocolate instead of milk chocolate
- Try sugar free hot cocoa or apple cider to quench the sweet craving
- Don't go grocery shopping when you are hungry- have a snack before leaving the house
- If you must splurge on sweets, choose the cookie that you REALLY want and eat only one
- Have your pumpkin or apple pie without the ice cream or whipped cream topping
- Use sugar substitute instead of regular sugar in recipes
- Avoid alcoholic beverages- 2 glasses of white wine has >200 calories- try sparkling water with lemon instead
- Drink at least 1 glass of water for every glass of alcohol- NEVER drink alcohol and drive
- If you are the cook- avoid sampling—chew gum or nibble on celery or carrot sticks while cooking
- Choose low fat, low sodium stock or broth in recipes
- If you love stuffing, go ahead and have a spoonful—but don't go back for seconds
- Choose fresh or steamed vegetables instead of creamy casseroles
- Serve dried cranberries instead of high calorie cranberry sauce
- Use skim milk instead of cream or whole milk in mashed potatoes
- Try baked whole sweet potatoes instead of high sugar sweet potato casserole
- Reach for the white meat on the turkey- the dark meat has more calories and fat
- Skip the hors d'oeuvres
- Say no to the gravy—it is loaded with fat and calories
- Don't skip breakfast / lunch in anticipation of a big dinner- you will be hungrier and over-eat

- Don't do all of the cooking- have a potluck contest- who can bring the best dish with the least fat and calories
- When you do your holiday shopping, park at the back of the parking lot and walk as far as you can to/from the store

#### **Ways to avoid stress for the holidays**

- If you are cooking a turkey- remember that it might not look like the pictures in the magazines- but it will likely taste wonderful
- There is no such thing as a "perfect meal"- it is the taste that counts
- Don't try to please everyone
- Try a new recipe ahead of time- don't make something new on the day of the dinner
- Make a shopping list before leaving for the grocery store. Check your recipes and list only the ingredients that you do not have on hand. Stick to the list!
- Remember to take a few deep breaths when you hear the doorbell ring—every family has its own stressors
- Exercise daily- don't stop your daily workout just because Aunt Martha is visiting- invite the rest of the family along
- GET MOVING--- after dinner, avoid the urge to melt into the couch—go for a walk, throw the football, play catch, walk the dog, play charades, ride your bike, rake the leaves, or go swimming. Make the activity a family affair

#### **Start a few new traditions**

- Instead of cooking a big meal, volunteer you and your family to serve at the local soup kitchen
- Take a meal to a shut-in or elderly person who lives alone
- Offer to drive your elderly neighbor to church or a family gathering
- Volunteer at your local nursing home to visit with the residents
- Join a group of carolers at the local children's hospital or nursing home
- Volunteer at the local food bank
- Take the money you would spend on a big meal and purchase a few coats/hats/gloves for the needy
- Adopt a family – there are many families who do not have any food to eat

As you celebrate this wonderful American tradition, keep in mind this is a time to join family and friends to give thanks for every blessing.

*"For each new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food,  
For love and friends,  
For everything Thy goodness sends"*  
**Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882).**

