



Holiday Helpings: Can it really be that bad?

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So you're sitting at the table and your Aunt Sissy puts a plate in front of you that looks like a huge pile of mush. There's everything from your mom's turkey and dressing and your sister's homemade rolls to your wife's green bean casserole among many other things. Not to mention the dessert buffet over your right shoulder with pumpkin pie, cherry cobbler, and double chocolate chip cookies! Everything smells so wonderful and you think to yourself, "It's just one day." How could this possibly hurt me?

Having holiday meals with family has become a huge social acceptance in our society. It's great to spend time with out-of-town family members and all the nutrition habits you've been practicing are put on hold. The one meal that you eat at Thanksgiving lunch with your family isn't going to diminish everything you've accomplished on the fitness front this year. But, the office Halloween candy (not to mention that of which you have at home for the trick-or-treaters), the office Thanksgiving luncheon, your kid's school luncheon, followed up with your family celebrations and leftovers will! Then, only a month later everything repeats itself for the rest of the holiday festivities. This is a time where knowing how to adapt recipes into their healthier counterparts, knowing portion sizes and incorporating alterations in life-long behaviors become necessary. Otherwise, you'll come out with the same unfavorable results you've experienced for years. Below are some tips to get you started:

Recipes:

- Use skinless turkey or chicken, or remove skin after preparation
- Season with herbs as opposed to salt-based spices
- Choose fruit based desserts
- Incorporate steamed vegetables or salads in place of casserole dishes
- Substitute low fat milk for recipes calling for whole milk or heavy cream
- Use recipes that recite bake, poach, microwave, steam, broil, roast, or grill

Portion Sizes:

- Fill you plate up once and leave it at that. Make sure you get a little of everything.
- Good rule of thumb: $\frac{1}{4}$ plate starch (mashed potatoes, bread), $\frac{1}{4}$ plate protein (turkey, chicken, brisquit), and $\frac{1}{2}$ plate vegetables and/or fruit.

Behavior Alteration:

- Go for an afternoon walk
- Prevent snacking if you're the preparer. Eat at designated mealtimes that day.
- Taste your food before you salt it