



Thriving Through Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is all about loved ones, food, fun and sometimes even football. But with the day fast approaching, you might be wondering how such an indulgent and chaotic holiday can fit into your health journey. Never fear — there are always ways to make wellness a part of your celebration. Give some of these techniques a try:

Start with a well-balanced breakfast. While you might initially want to wait all day to eat in order to have more room for dinner, eating a healthy breakfast will help you start the day right and help you avoid binge eating when dinner comes around.

Stay hydrated. Alcohol and soda might be tempting, but make sure to include lots of water throughout the day.

Prioritize the foods you enjoy. Thanksgiving is a fun time to try new foods, but loading your plate with unknown, yet still rich and

heavy, food can lead you to feel obligated into eating everything you've taken. Remember, you can always go back to try more!

Incorporate physical activity into your plans. Try attending a local run or start an impromptu football game in the backyard with your family or friends. Staying active will help you feel better by the evening, and it'll help you burn calories quicker, too.

Try healthier alternatives. If you're in charge of the menu this year, this is your chance to try some new recipes that still taste great but use fresher, more enriching ingredients. For example, you could try this healthier take on the classic [green bean casserole](#).

Enjoy pumpkin everything! As the most iconic treat of the season, pumpkin also offers a lot of health benefits: vitamin A, potassium and fiber. Enjoy it roasted or as a delicious dessert.

Take advantage of leftovers.

The whole meal doesn't have to be eaten in one sitting. Leftovers are a great way to enjoy even more food while still giving yourself time to digest. As soon as you feel full, listen to your body and pack up a box for later.

Be kind to yourself. At the end of the day, Thanksgiving is a holiday meant to spend time with loved ones. It might be intimidating for anyone on their health journey, but remember that you don't have to be perfect. You're allowed to eat a big turkey dinner in moderation. These tips can hopefully make you feel better about your progress, but the most important thing is that you have fun and reconnect with the people you care about. Enjoy!

"10 Healthy Tips to Tackle Thanksgiving," <https://intermountainhealthcare.org/blogs/topics/live-well/2014/11/10-healthy-tips-to-tackle-thanksgiving/>, accessed Oct. 10, 2022

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH CASSEROLE

SERVES: 9 PREP TIME: 30 minutes TOTAL TIME: 2 hours

- 6 cups butternut squash, peeled and chopped
- 1 ½ cups parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage leaves, chopped
- 2 ½ teaspoons salt, divided
- 1 ½ teaspoons black pepper, divided
- 1 ½ teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, chopped
- 6 slices of bacon, cooked
- 2 yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 2 cups of fresh kale, stemmed and chopped
- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese
- ¼ cup smoked (or plain) almonds, chopped

1. Preheat your oven to 400°F. In a 9x13-inch baking dish, toss together the butternut squash and parsnips, olive oil, sage, 2 teaspoons of salt, 1 teaspoon of black pepper and the thyme. Bake the mixture until the squash and parsnips are tender, about 1 hour and 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a skillet over medium heat, about 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate to cool. Keep the bacon grease in the skillet to sauté the onions. When the bacon is cooled, crumble it with your hands into large pieces and set aside.

3. Add the onions to the skillet and cook them over medium heat, about 25 to 35 minutes. Add the kale, butter, apple cider vinegar, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Cover the skillet and cook until the kale is wilted, about 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Add the kale mixture and the bacon to the butternut squash mixture in your baking dish. Gently mix everything and spread it into an even layer. Top your dish with cheese.

5. Sprinkle with almonds and garnish with sage and thyme leaves (if desired). Bake until the cheese is melted, about 5 minutes.

ESTIMATED AMOUNT PER SERVING: 1 cup, 271 calories, 17.9g total fat, 1039mg sodium, 20.1g total carbohydrates, 4.3g total sugars, 10.3g protein

Recipe adapted from thepioneerwoman.com



SETTING HEALTHY HOLIDAY BOUNDARIES

If you experience stress throughout the holiday season, it might be time to set some healthy boundaries to relieve yourself of the burden of over-giving. Boundaries are guidelines that set safe, reasonable and permissible limits. While spending time with loved ones can be a treat — constant togetherness, unhealthy food choices and exhaustion can quickly become symptoms of over-extending yourself.

Brene Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston, defines healthy boundaries as “simply our lists of what’s okay and not okay.” By taking time to understand what healthy boundaries mean to you (as they differ from person to person), it will help you find peace and avoid uncomfortable feelings and situations. Additionally, setting boundaries can help to improve your health, self-confidence and relationships.

When establishing your boundaries, you may not only choose to decline “holiday invitations and houseguests [but also change or end] a personal tradition of holiday service or gifting to others,” according to [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com). While setting boundaries might feel challenging, they should be communicated in “a calm, simple, and direct way without shaming or blaming the others” and then you can “pleasantly repeat a variation of your assertive statement” if you face resistance. Boundaries are set to protect your energy, but how others react to your boundaries is not your responsibility.

Here are a few examples of healthy boundaries that can be set throughout the holiday season:

- Blocking time on your calendar for rest
- Setting reasonable limits on gift-giving or purchasing
- Creating assignments for other family members to help with preparing big meals
- Limiting the time you are with emotionally charged individuals and settings
- Making time for self-care (i.e., exercise, meditation, healthy hobbies)
- Knowing your limits
- Speaking up when needed — and in a calm, direct way
- Saying “no” when needed
- Giving yourself credit for your hard work

Check out this new resource on boundary setting: [“The Book of Boundaries: Set the Limits That Will Set You Free,”](#) by Melissa Urban.

“How to Reduce Holiday Stress by Setting Strong Boundaries,” The Family Centre, Dec. 1, 2021, familycentre.org.”