



Jennifer Dutton
Regional Extension Agent
News Release

Turkey Time Tips to Keep Your Tummy Trim

Many people have an “all or nothing” mindset toward Thanksgiving celebrations. However, you can still enjoy your seasonal home-cooked favorites without feeling like a stuffed turkey. There are several strategies that can help you stay in check this holiday season. Perhaps the best and most nutritious strategy is to fill your plate half with vegetables, one quarter with a lean meat and the rest with a starch of your choice. Another option is to fill your plate with anything you want but you can’t go back for seconds. If it doesn’t fit on one plate, you’re eating too much. You can also start with dessert first, eat a fresh apple just before the meal the sweetness of the apple is filling and satisfies hunger causing you to not overeat and it ends a tendency to overindulge in calorie laden desserts. The last strategy is to eat slowly and stop when you are full. Eating fast = eating more food. Also be sure to drink calorie-free water to help fill up your stomach and keep you hydrated. Coffee and alcohol tend to dehydrate the body and the body tends to mistake thirst for hunger.

You can also serve a tasty Thanksgiving meal with less fat and sugar by substituting healthier ingredients and cooking methods to prepare your traditional favorites. If you can’t control the ingredients that go into a dish, simply go for smaller portions so you can sample all the different foods. One way to cut your fat intake is to swap mashed potatoes or sweet potato casserole for simple baked sweet potatoes. Instead of cooking your turkey with butter, use a mixture of olive oil, onions, garlic and fresh herbs, such as rosemary, sage, and thyme. Opt for white meat turkey without the skin and skip the gravy. Substitute a spoonful of cranberry sauce instead of gravy—it’s much lower in fat, and will add a boost of antioxidants to your diet. Serve steamed veggies instead of cooking veggies in fat and skip the butter on rolls and corn. For dessert, use fat-free, sugar-free gelatin and pudding to make a creamy fruit salad. These simple tips will save you a lot of fat calories.

Never skip meals during the day before your Thanksgiving dinner- meal skipping leads to excess hunger, overindulgence, and impulsive choices. Take part in some type of physical activity for at least 30-60 minutes. You can begin your physical activity by clearing the table and washing dishes. Only prepare enough food for one meal and avoid taking home leftovers. If you have leftover turkey, use it to make a pot of soup with fresh chunky vegetables.

For more information about healthy eating please contact Jennifer Dutton, Regional Extension Agent—Human Nutrition, Diet and Health at the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416 or email jld0021@aces.edu.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability. Visit our website at www.aces.edu/StClair.