

The Thanksgiving plate gets a makeover

November 18 2015, by Tyra Haag



With the holidays rapidly approaching, nutrition experts at UT suggest some mealtime makeovers that will keep your Thanksgiving feast

yummy without expanding your tummy.

Lee Murphy, a lecturer in UT's Department of Nutrition, urges people—especially dieters—to be mindful of what they serve at Thanksgiving, a day that is known for a plethora of temptations.

"For individuals in the process of losing weight or maintaining losses, holiday meals include a landslide of temptations," said Murphy. "I would recommend filling your plate with unprocessed vegetables, like fresh green beans instead of green bean casserole, lean white turkey with minimal gravy, and nutrient-dense starches like fresh sweet potatoes without the buttery topping."

While no one wants to give up the traditional Thanksgiving fare, substituting each dish on your plate with a healthier alternative can dramatically reduce your calorie intake.

Here are Murphy's "eat this, not that" suggestions:

- Choose white-meat instead of dark-meat turkey to cut calories and fat grams.
- Sweet potatoes—without the butter and marshmallow topping—provide a more nutrient-dense substitute for white potatoes.
- Green beans—versus the traditional cream-loaded green bean casserole—cuts sodium and fat intake.
- Steamed corn—rather than creamed corn—also trims fats and sodium.
- Whole wheat rolls have a nutritional advantage over white rolls because they provide more vitamins and dietary fiber content
- Pumpkin pie is a better choice than pecan pie because it contains about half the calories and fat.

Murphy also advises people to avoid splurging. The temptation to overindulge comes with the holidays—from Halloween through New Year's—and can lead to unwanted weight gain.

So enjoy in moderation.

"All foods can fit into a healthy lifestyle, but we still should remember reasonable serving sizes—even at Thanksgiving," said Murphy.

Provided by University of Tennessee at Knoxville

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