Tips for a Healthy Thanksgiving

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During the Thanksgiving holiday, it is very common for people to gain five to seven percent of their body weight. Here is advice from the Valley's own Dr. Jack Wolfson on how to reduce the amount of calories in your upcoming holiday meal.

Meats

Whatever type of meat you serve, whether it is turkey, ham, chicken or all three, make sure the meat is organic and free-range. Free-range means the animal had access to going outside, getting sunshine, getting fresh air and eating the appropriate foods. Free-range farming conditions lead to a healthier animal, which produces a healthier product for consumers.

Side Dishes

Every holiday meal needs a few side dishes to accentuate the main course. Here are common Thanksgiving delicacies to use in moderation or avoid altogether.

Stuffing Stuffing is pure carbohydrates. The higher the amount of carbohydrate intake, the higher the risk of developing diabetes, which is associated with heart disease, stroke and cancer. Avoid large portions of stuffing, as this can be very unhealthy.

Gravy Gravy is a favorite to top off mashed potatoes, stuffing and even turkey. Yet, gravy is very calorie-dense; some even contains artificial flavoring and MSG, which is linked to a variety of health issues. It is very easy to use this in excess, so be sure to watch the amount you pour over the dishes in your holiday meal.

Bread Everyone knows that bread is a grain-based carbohydrate. Limit the amount of rolls during your meal. Instead, try to reach for gluten-free options.

Make sure to include plenty of green leafy vegetables, preferably organic. This is an easy way to keep you full, fit and trim at the same time.

Desserts

Be careful of those tempting holiday desserts. Outside they may look delicious, but inside they contain an immense amount of sugar that can be damaging to you physically. Avoid that extra cookie or second piece of cake. If including cranberry sauce, use fresh or frozen cranberries as opposed to a canned variety that usually contain added sugar. Cranberries are high in antioxidants, which are cancer and heart disease fighters. Also, try fresh fruits with nuts and seeds as a healthier alternative to traditional holiday sweets.

Beverages

Limit alcohol. Thanksgiving usually lasts all-long day and it is very easy to consume a lot of alcohol calories. Try and limit yourselves to one or two alcoholic beverages. Replacing alcohol with a cup of herbal tea is a great way to end the holiday meal without any calories.

For more tips from Dr. Jack Wolfson, visit www.cvcheart.com.