



Anne Arundel County, MD

Holiday Meal Planning for Seniors

Recipes and Tips for a Healthier Thanksgiving





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Common Dietary Needs for Seniors

Risk Factors

- ! High sodium or sugar content in traditional holiday dishes.
- ! Difficulty chewing or swallowing certain foods.
- ! Limited appetite or specific dietary restrictions like low-fat or diabetic-friendly diets.

Prevention Strategies

- Focus on nutrient-dense, soft-textured foods that are flavorful yet healthy.
- Substitute traditional ingredients with healthier options (e.g., reduced sodium and natural sweeteners).
- Offer smaller portions to accommodate reduced appetites.

Creating a Senior-Friendly Thanksgiving Menu

This menu features delicious and health-conscious options that cater to seniors' dietary needs while keeping the Thanksgiving spirit alive.

Main Dish

Herb-Roasted Turkey Breast (low sodium)

Side Dishes

Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Cinnamon
(no added sugar)

Steamed Green Beans with Almonds
(lightly seasoned)

Whole Grain Stuffing with Cranberries and Apples.

Dessert

Mini Pumpkin Pies (low sugar)



Full Recipes for Healthy Thanksgiving Dishes

Herb-Roasted Turkey Breast

Ingredients:

- 1 **boneless turkey breast (4-5 pounds)**
- 2 tablespoons **olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon **garlic powder**
- 1 teaspoon **dried rosemary**
- 1 teaspoon **dried thyme**
- 1 teaspoon **paprika**
- ½ teaspoon **black pepper**
- ½ teaspoon **salt (optional or low sodium)**

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Rub turkey breast with olive oil and season evenly with the spices.
3. Place the turkey breast on a roasting pan and cook for 90 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F.
4. Let rest for 10 minutes before slicing.



Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Cinnamon



Ingredients:

- 3 **large sweet potatoes**
- 2 tablespoons **unsalted butter**
- ¼ cup **low-fat milk**
- 1 teaspoon **cinnamon**
- Pinch of **nutmeg**

Instructions:

1. Peel and cube sweet potatoes. Boil in water until tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Drain and mash the potatoes in a bowl.
3. Stir in butter, milk, cinnamon, and nutmeg until smooth.

Steamed Green Beans with Almonds

Ingredients:

1 pound **fresh green beans**, trimmed

2 tablespoons **olive oil**

¼ cup **sliced almonds**

1 teaspoon **lemon juice**

Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Steam green beans for 8-10 minutes or until tender but crisp.
2. In a skillet, heat olive oil and toast almonds until golden.
3. Toss green beans with almonds and drizzle with lemon juice.



Whole Grain Stuffing with Cranberries and Apples



Ingredients:

- 4 cups **cubed whole grain bread**
- 1 small **onion**, diced
- 1 **celery stalk**, diced
- 1 **apple**, diced
- ½ cup **dried cranberries**
- 2 cups low-sodium **chicken or vegetable broth**
- 1 tablespoon **olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon **sage**
- 1 teaspoon **thyme**

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Sauté onion, celery, and apple in olive oil until soft.
3. Combine bread cubes, cranberries, and sautéed mixture in a baking dish.
4. Pour broth evenly over the mixture, then sprinkle with sage and thyme.
5. Cover with foil and bake for 25 minutes, then uncover and bake for an additional 10 minutes.

Mini Pumpkin Pies (makes 12 servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 **premade pie crust** (low sugar or gluten-free optional)
- 1 cup **pumpkin puree**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **low-fat evaporated milk**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **honey or maple syrup**
- 1 teaspoon **cinnamon**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon **nutmeg**
- 1 **egg**

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Roll out pie crust and cut into 12 circles to fit into a muffin tin. Press into the cups.
3. In a bowl, mix pumpkin puree, evaporated milk, honey, cinnamon, nutmeg, and egg until smooth.
4. Pour filling into each crust.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until filling is set. Cool before serving.



Meal Preparation Tips for Caregivers

Risk Factors

- ! Overexertion or stress during meal prep.
- ! Lack of adaptations for seniors to participate in the cooking process.

Prevention Strategies

- Prepare ingredients in advance (e.g., chopping, measuring) to reduce day-of stress.
- Involve seniors in easy tasks like peeling vegetables or stirring.
- Ensure kitchen safety by keeping pathways clear and providing seating for breaks.



Navigating Mealtime with Seniors

Risk Factors

- ! Difficulty handling utensils or chewing tough foods.
- ! Overwhelmed by large portions.

Prevention Strategies

- Serve smaller portions and offer seconds if desired.
- Provide adaptive utensils if needed.
- Create a calm and inviting dining environment with soft music or meaningful conversation.

With thoughtful planning, Thanksgiving meals can be delicious and health-conscious. Caregivers play a crucial role in making this special holiday meal accessible for seniors. For assistance with meal preparation or personalized caregiving services, contact **Right at Home Anne Arundel County** at www.RightAtHomeAA.com.