

**The Post Rock Connection**  
**Post Rock Extension District #1 Family and Consumer Sciences Column**  
**Month of November 2024**  
**By Jamie Rathbun, Family and Community Wellness Agent**

**How to Have Your Thanksgiving Pie and Eat It Too**

The holidays are a fantastic time. We have family, we have friends, we have food...but how do we keep ourselves from overindulging in the oh-so-tantalizing holiday foods?

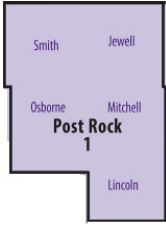
So many times, at Thanksgiving we see lists of tips on how to lighten up Thanksgiving foods. And initially that is what I thought about focusing on for this month's column- simple recipe modifications to make traditional holiday foods healthier.

But let's be honest, part of what many of us (myself included) are thankful for is that traditional turkey and gravy, those homemade mashed potatoes, the stuffing and of course ... the pie! With a little planning, you can enjoy that piece of pumpkin (or pecan or cherry or apple) pie and not feel overstuffed. Feeling uncomfortable due to overeating leads to a less enjoyable time with friends and family. Try these tips:

1. **Don't skip on meals earlier in the day.** Forgoing other meals because we want to savor food during the main meal leads to overeating and eventually feeling miserable. Plan to eat a healthy breakfast, and if the gathering is in the evening, eat a salad or healthy lunch before you go to the main event. It is also important to stay hydrated throughout the day.
2. **Downsize your plate size.** Use smaller plates when possible for the meal and the pie. Your portions will automatically become smaller. Yet, they will still fill the plate, giving the impression of a larger and still satisfying meal.
3. **Browse the buffet.** Check out all the food before loading up on lesser-liked items.

4. **Divide and conquer.** Start out with half the food you want the first time it is passed, or when you serve yourself from a buffet. This also will force you to eat slower and give your stomach time to begin feeling full before you fill your plate with more food.
5. **Make fruit and veggies a part of your plate.** Serve a vegetable tray so there are some lower calorie choices or select these from a Thanksgiving buffet. If you're bringing a dish, bring some fresh fruit or vegetable salad.
6. **Serve some foods separately.** Rather than heaping the whipped cream on the pie for guests or mixing in the salad dressing, pass these higher calorie items and let people serve themselves. Also, include a lower calorie salad dressing choice.
7. **Make your first bites of pie your best bites.** According to psychologists, your first bites of food taste best. If you slow down when eating dessert, you'll enjoy the taste more and can be satisfied with a smaller amount. Swallow each mouthful before taking the next bite! If you are becoming full, take the remaining pie home so you can enjoy it tomorrow.
8. **Provide take-home containers for guests.** Send extra food, or food people feel too full to eat that day, home with guests. Buy some inexpensive plastic containers or other take-home boxes. Avoid letting food sit out after a meal. Perishable food shouldn't be left at room temperature more than 2 hours.
9. **Be mindful during the holidays.** The average person may gain a pound between Thanksgiving and New Year's. That doesn't sound so bad; however, people don't tend to lose all this weight and it adds up over the years. There are usually plenty of opportunities to partake in higher-calorie foods throughout the holiday season. Plan ahead and check to see how hungry you are before you take your first bite.

*The Post Rock District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith Counties. Contact Jamie Rathbun at [jrathbun@ksu.edu](mailto:jrathbun@ksu.edu) or by calling 785-524-4432. Stay connected with "Post Rock Extension" on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Our website is [www.postrock.ksu.edu](http://www.postrock.ksu.edu).*



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