The holiday season is the most difficult time for most people to make healthy choices and stick to their routine. Due to numerous holiday functions and countless parties, it is hard for even the healthiest health nut to stay on track. That being said, the holidays are not the time to hang up your hat and give into ever-present temptations. The best way to approach the holiday season is with a strategy.

First, focus on the good. Turkey can be one of the good things since it is extremely lean and full of protein. Just stay away from fried turkey and the skin, and you should be fine. Veggies, veggies, veggies! Skip the corn and the green bean casserole and opt for fresh salads and roasted winter vegetables instead. Another great thing about the holidays is that they present opportunities to include fiber in your diet. Rather than filling up on white dinner rolls and mashed potatoes, look for whole wheat dinner rolls and brown rice. Choosing these options will satisfy your hunger in a healthier way.

Sometimes, change is really for the best. In this case, the change that needs to happen may very well be cooking habits. Skip the full-fat dairy products and replace them with lower calorie selections. For example, substitute whole milk with skim and use low-fat yogurt instead of sour cream.

Finally, I must address what many people consider to be their kryptonite when it comes to food: dessert. As a dessert lover, I could never suggest a menu without dessert! However, there are definitely healthier options than pecan pie or chocolate cake. Try a handful of roasted cinnamon pecans or cocoa-coated almonds. Look for a recipe for hearty muffins full of fruit and nuts. If you just can’t resist the temptation, your best choice is a small piece of pumpkin pie.

Feeling alone for the holidays? You don’t have to be. If family and friends are not available for you to share time with, consider volunteering at one of the many holiday dinners around the metro. Volunteering gives you the opportunity to do something good for other people and make yourself feel good in the process. What better way to give thanks?
Happy for the Holidays

The holidays can really hit some of us hard, especially if we compare what we have/get with what others have/get. Instead of making the season a competition between yourself and the rest of the world, try a new approach.

Certain relatives or coworkers or acquaintances really may annoy you all year long, but that doesn’t mean that you have to reciprocate or be unkind during the holidays. You can’t change any of them, but you can change you and the attitude you have about life. Be the best you can be, and if others aren’t quite there, it’s their problem.

Be realistic about what you have time for and what you feel like doing. One reason the holiday season is so unpleasant for some is that they try to be all things to all people and to go and do incessantly. Who wouldn’t be worn out! Instead, decide in advance what you have the time and energy for, and plan around that. It may mean that you have to decline some invitations or scale down the meals you prepare, but that can be a healthy thing. Nobody really enjoys being around a martyr because we just don’t like to be made to feel guilty about things you have chosen to do to yourself. We’d rather spend that time enjoying your company.

If you’re one of those people who shops for months and spares no expense to buy just the right gifts for people, and then you pout because all of your presents are crappy, then stop it! Giving gifts is not a contest to see who can one-up the other. If shopping is a joy to you, and if you have the money to be extravagant, then enjoy the hunt. However, don’t expect that everyone else has the same. If there are certain kinds of things that you prefer to receive, then tell people throughout the year. Your sister might not have the money to buy you an expensive sweater that you want if she finds out at the last possible moment. If she has some lead time, however, she might manage to put back enough money to get it for you.

If friends and family have been hard hit by the economy, why not forgo the presents all together and just plan time together. Volunteering in the community or doing something kind for a neighbor always feels good, and that’s really what the season is about. Material gifts fall by the wayside over the years, but time spent with the people you love will last forever. When you have happy memories, you can relive them over and over again.

Make Family Time Special

1. Create a family identity by working together as a team. Accomplish tasks together as well as spend time on leisure activities.
2. Give everyone appropriate levels of responsibility. Part of belonging to a group involves being interdependent. This means contributing to the good of the group just as the group contributes to us. Even a young child can contribute by setting the table or bringing the trash out of the bathroom.
3. Nurture your children’s positive features. Too often, we ignore people when they are behaving well and then pounce on them when they do something we dislike. Instead, we should focus our attention on the positive behaviors. Then we will be more likely to see those behaviors more often.
4. Create an environment for inner peace. Today’s world moves fast, and this can easily put any of us into sensory overload (especially young children). What we lack today that we once had an opportunity to get regularly is time for quiet reflection. In addition to the times for high energy activities, we also need time to be quiet and to reflect on things.
5. Be unconditional in your love for each other.
Keeping It Real for Thanksgiving

For many of you, the holiday season brings as much stress as it does pleasure. The TV ads show happy, smiling, perfect people with loving families and perfectly groomed pets. They drive fabulous cars and wear fabulous clothes, and everyone just loves...fabulous.

We can’t change what the ad executives throw at us, but we can change the way all that “perfection” makes us feel. In the realm of stress relief, attitude really is everything.

TV families obviously enjoy spending every moment of time together. They carry food-laden bowls and platters to the table together and sit as close as they can to each other while they eat. Real families might not really like even talking to each other, but that’s okay. Thanksgiving happens only once a year, so, if nothing else, be thankful for that. And if all the in-laws don’t want to squish in around you, that just means you don’t have to suck your gut in so hard.

TV families look effortlessly styled and groomed while wearing to-die-for clothes that never wrinkle or get gravy spilled on them. Your family might be hard-pressed to find something that fits. Be thankful all that all of them is covered.

TV families drive cars that are spacious and clean and have fine European detailing. The tires are never bald and the engines don’t knock when you pull up to a stoplight. Your car, on the other hand, broke down two blocks from your house. Be thankful that it didn’t wait until you were half-way to Alabama to visit people you’re not that crazy about (or worse, after you get there, and then you have to stay an extra week).

TV families drink the right kind of beer and wine and champagne, but nobody ever gets wasted and hurls on the fluffy white rug in the living room. Um, we’ll just skip this one.

TV families are so sweet they make your head hurt just looking at them. REAL families know that the turkey tastes just as good on fine festive paper plates and Boston crème pie flavored yogurt can’t come close to the real deal. REAL families know you can’t tell everyone about what happened in Vegas because Cousin Lisa has some videos of you that she’s dying to upload.

Real families live and laugh and love all year long.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Turkey Facts!

1. Wild turkeys have excellent vision and hearing. With a 270 degree field of vision, it’s no wonder they can elude some hunters.
2. Most often, turkeys are found in hardwood forests with grassy areas.
3. Turkeys can drown if they look up when it is raining.
4. They can also have heart attacks! When the Air Force was conducting test runs and breaking the sound barrier, fields of turkeys would drop dead.
5. Three U. S. towns are named after turkeys: Turkey, Texas; Turkey Creek, Louisiana; Turkey, North Carolina.
7. The heaviest turkey ever raised weighed in at 86 pounds!
8. More than 45 million turkeys are cooked and 525 million pounds of turkey are eaten during Thanksgiving.
9. A spooked turkey can run at speeds up to 20 miles per hour.
10. Ben Franklin wanted the national bird to be a turkey instead of an Eagle.

Do you have ideas for articles or recipes? Send them to Mary Turner at mtturner@occc.edu or to Alta Price at aprice@occc.edu.
Student Support Services houses a variety of services designed to enhance the performance and well-being of students at Oklahoma City Community College.

- Services to Students with Disabilities, including providing accommodations for documented disabilities, interpreting and captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing students, and assistive technology.
- Professional counseling by licensed providers.
- Learning support specialists to assist with academic needs such as learning styles, study skills, test-taking, and general health and wellness issues.
- TRIO Grant Programs (Upward Bound and Trio Student Support Services) designed to help first generation college students learn more about college before they arrive and how to be more successful once they are here.

For more information about our services and how to access them, please visit our website at http://www.occc.edu/support/ or call us at 682-7520. We are located on the first floor of the Main Building near SEM Entry 3.

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**Pumpkin Soup**

3/4 cup water  
1 small onion, chopped  
1 can (8 ounces) pumpkin puree  
1 cup unsalted vegetable broth  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1 cup fat-free milk (use soy milk if vegetarian)  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 green onion, green top only, chopped

In a large saucepan, heat 1/4 cup of the water over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Don’t let the onion dry out. Add the remaining water, pumpkin, broth, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the milk and cook until hot. Don’t boil. Ladle into warmed individual bowls and garnish with black pepper and green onion tops. Serve immediately.

Per cup:  
- 72 calories  
- 3 grams protein  
- 12 grams carbohydrate  
- 1 gram total fat  
- 1 milligram cholesterol  
- 241 milligrams sodium  
- 2 grams fiber  
- 199 milligrams potassium  
- 78 milligrams calcium