

A message from NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

November 2, 2022

Greetings from NDS! It's that time of year when the holiday decorations and celebration planning is well underway for Thanksgiving. This week's Wellness Wednesday topic is:

## Healthy Thanksgiving Celebrations

Holiday celebrations are excellent opportunities to continue promoting healthy lifestyles, highlight healthy foods, and provide consistent messages! Make Thanksgiving more than food by shifting the focus to fun! Use this time to emphasize the importance of healthy foods and share ways students can stay active during the holiday!

Ideas for healthy celebrations at your school:

### **Turkey Trot:**

Hold a local walk/run, it's a great way for families and the community to get involved in fun and fitness.

### **Community Service:**

Take a field trip to help the community or have students write letters or make crafts to send those who they think is need Thanksgiving cheer (i.e. nursing home, veterans, children's hospital).

### **Gratitude Display:**

Make a gratitude craft display as a reminder of what Thanksgiving is all about, make a class collage or write down individual expressions of gratitude on colored paper and tie it together to make a gratitude garland.

### **School-wide physical activity challenge:**

Students or classrooms can compete to be the most active by making physical activity goals for the day or week.

### **Plate Full of Thanks:**

Have students write out what they are thankful for inside silhouette cutouts of fruits and vegetables. Glue them to a paper plate to make a “Plate full of Thanks!”

[Action for Healthy Kids](#) provides additional ideas for getting active at school as well as healthy Thanksgiving snack ideas!

**And to all of our partners, we wish you a happy & healthy Thanksgiving!**



**November 9, 2022**

**Greetings from NDS!**

**This week's Wellness Wednesday Topic discusses the November Harvest of the Month:**

## **Winter Squash**

Winter squash is part of the gourd family and includes a dozen of varieties. They have ribbed or bumpy skins, irregular shapes, and vibrant colors, which range from yellow to orange to dark green or even multi-toned. Winter squash has a dense texture and flavor with a firm flesh. Winter squash takes about 100 days from seed to harvest. The most common varieties include acorn, butternut, delicate, spaghetti, acorn, kabocha, hubbard, sweet dumpling and sugar pumpkins.

The nutritional value will vary by variety. Most are excellent sources of vitamin C, which is important in the body's healing process and may play a role in guarding against heart disease and cancer. In addition to vitamin C, most are also excellent sources of vitamin A, vitamin B6, potassium, and fiber.

Squash can be roasted, baked, sautéed, boiled, microwaved, and made into a variety of tasty soups and casseroles to enjoy!

**Roast:** Slice squash in half, remove seeds and stringy material, and place cut-side up on baking sheet. Rub with oil and season with herbs and spices as desired. Flip the squash cut-side down and roast in a 400 F oven for 25–45 minutes (depending on the size) or until flesh is fork tender. Remove from oven and cool for 10 minutes before handling.

**Microwave:** Remove the skin from the squash and cut in half. Remove the seeds. Place on microwave-safe plate cut-side down and heat on high for 5–10 minutes depending on size, or until tender. Let stand for a few minutes before handling.

**Boil:** Remove the skin from the squash and cut in half. Remove the seeds and stringy material. Cut the squash into 1-inch chunks and place in a large saucepan. Add enough water to cover the squash. Bring to a gentle boil,

cover, and simmer until the flesh is desired tenderness, about 10–15 minutes.

**Stew:** Remove the skin and seeds from the squash. Slice into uniform small chunks. Mix into soups, stews, or casseroles at the beginning of the cooking time.



A message from NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

November 16, 2022

Greetings from NDS!

We have all been guilty of staying up for “just one more episode” and many of us could (and should) do better for ourselves and our families. Plus it’s that time of year when we have so much to do and so little time. It’s a good time to focus on this week’s Wellness Wednesday topic:

## Better Sleep



Did you know your behaviors during the day, and especially before bedtime, have an impact on your quality of sleep? Your daily routines like what you eat and drink, the medications you take, how you schedule your days and how you choose to spend your evenings can significantly affect your quality of sleep.

“Sleep hygiene” refers to a series of healthy sleep habits that can improve your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep. Follow these tips to establish healthy sleep habits:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule. Get up at the same time every day, even on weekends or during vacations.
- Set a bedtime that is early enough for you to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep (for adults); more for children and teens.
- Do not go to bed unless you are sleepy.
- If you do not fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed. Go do a quiet activity without a lot of light exposure. It is especially important to avoid using electronics.

- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing. Keep the room at a comfortable, cool temperature.
- Limit exposure to bright light in the evenings.
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Do not eat a large meal before bedtime. If you are hungry at night, eat a light, healthy snack.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.

Try using the [Bedtime Calculator](#) to determine an appropriate bedtime for you! You might be surprised!

For more healthy sleep tips and [videos](#) about many aspects of sleep habits including the mental and physical impact of insufficient sleep and fatigue, visit the [Sleep Foundation](#).



**11/23/2022**

## **Thanksgiving Greetings from NDS!**

### *Wellness Wednesday: Thanksgiving Food Safety*

The Thanksgiving Holiday is a time to gather with family to enjoy good food and share memories. For many, Thanksgiving is a time to show-off their culinary skills, whether this is their first time cooking for a crowd or they are seasoned chefs. In either case, maintaining proper food safety practices is of the utmost importance. When problems arise in the kitchen, it can lead to foodborne illness, which can be especially severe for vulnerable dinner guests. Keeping the following tips in mind, ensures that everyone around the table makes memories for all the right, tasty reasons.

### **First Things First**

- This may seem obvious, but handwashing is essential! If hands are not washed properly, you can contaminate foods and surfaces. Remember to wash the backs of your hands, between fingers and fingernails for at least 20 seconds. Wash hands if you are changing tasks, or when going from meat prep to other dishes like the vegetables, to prevent cross-contamination.

### **Turkey Thawing**

- Some may believe that placing a frozen turkey on the counter top overnight, is the best way to thaw. Thawing at room temperature can cause bacteria to grow and multiply. The correct way to thaw a frozen turkey is slowly in the refrigerator over a few days. Once thawed out, don't refreeze!

### **Does Your Turkey Need a Bath?**

- It is not necessary to wash poultry. Doing so, splashes harmful bacteria like Salmonella and Campylobacter in the sink, on counters and surrounding items in the kitchen.



## Time & Temperature Abuse

- Invest in a meat thermometer to make sure the internal temperature of the turkey is at least **165°F**. To make sure meat is thoroughly cooked, check in the thickest part of the breast, innermost thigh and innermost part of the wing. (USDA)
- It is easy to be distracted by great company and conversation. In the midst of the festivities, try not to leave food sitting out any longer than necessary. Keep foods out of the Temperature Danger Zone which is anywhere between **41°F and 135°F**. The best principle is to keep cold foods cold, and hot foods hot.



## Clean Up

- Place perishable items in the fridge within two hours. Separate them into small shallow containers to allow for quicker cooling before putting items in the fridge.

## Leftovers

- There's nothing quite like Thanksgiving leftovers - sandwiches or a bowl loaded with all the tastiest dishes – Yum!
- As a general rule, foods made at home can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 7 days. Even if it hasn't been that long, when in doubt, throw it out.

## Additional Resources

### USDA's 5 Tips for Food Safe Thanksgiving

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2016/11/21/usdas-five-tips-food-safe-thanksgiving>

### More on Safe Food Temperatures

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/danger-zone-40f-140f>