

What a Thanksgiving Meal Can Teach Your Kids

IF YOU GOOGLE “kids friendly Thanksgiving dinner” the search brings just over 36 million results with a variety of ideas. Some suggestions are reasonable ways to simplify the meal with fewer ingredients and less spice while others suggest going straight to peanut butter and jelly sandwiches cut in turkey shapes. As you probably already know, I have a problem with kid’s menus. Not only are most of them nutritional garbage, they also take away opportunities to expose our children to more challenging foods. As a result, instead of moving steadily through a picky eating phase, some kids get stuck in it for many years.

Thanksgiving can be a wonderful, healthy and nutritious meal and a great opportunity to create life-long memories together with your kids. It is also a perfect chance to practice the Division of Responsibility in feeding and teach your children about eating traditions, table manners and enjoyment of food. The Division of Responsibility rule encourages parents to choose what, when and where to serve while kids are to decide how much and whether to eat.

So how can the turkey day become a lesson in this evidence-based feeding strategy?

1 The traditional Thanksgiving dinner is a self-serve family style meal. This makes a perfect setting for practicing the Division of Responsibility. *Not like pre-portioned meals, family style method encourages self-regulation when kids can practice listening to the body to gauge how full or hungry they are.* The ability to self-regulate the amount of food we need to eat is a great tool for adults, too!

(continued on page 2)

did you know...

- ▶ The first Thanksgiving was in the autumn of 1621, it didn’t become a national holiday until 1863, proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln.
- ▶ Historians say that no turkey was served on the first Thanksgiving. Deer, venison, geese, oysters, lobster and fish were on the menu and probably pumpkin, but not pumpkin pie.
- ▶ Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national bird, not the eagle.
- ▶ Bisphenol-A (BPA) has been used in food packaging since the 1960’s.
- ▶ In 2012, The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned the use of BPA in baby bottles and drinking cups.
- ▶ A recent study from Harvard University found that college students drinking cold drinks from polycarbonate bottles had 93% more BPA in their bodies than when they drank liquids from other containers.

Sources: 20 Thanksgiving Fun Facts, Kim Grundy, The Huffington Post, Columbia University, Harvard University

Quotable Quotes

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it, is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

– William Arthur Ward

INSIDE:

- ◆ Choose Plastics Carefully
- ◆ Thanksgiving Activity
- ◆ Plastics 101
- ◆ Recipes



What a Thanksgiving Meal Can Teach Your Kids

— Continued from front page

2 The Thanksgiving meal is about enjoying the family and friends and being thankful for what we have. What a great concept to bear in mind as your family sits down to meals throughout the year! *Whining and complaining about anything, including the food, is very far from the spirit of Thanksgiving.* Being grateful for the food they have in front of them and the family they are surrounded by can help kids become less fussy eaters.

3 The Thanksgiving meal celebrates food and eating, and it does not mean that everything served that day has to taste decadent and be covered in butter. In fact, the Thanksgiving menu of the first settlers was a very healthy, simple but very delicious and thoroughly enjoyed meal, bursting with flavors and colors of seasonal produce. *Shifting the focus from calories and the number of bites of broccoli to enjoying the food is a way to teach children about a healthy relationship with food for the rest of their lives.*

4 Everyone is in a good mood during the Thanksgiving meal. *Research shows that a positive atmosphere during meals helps kids eat better while negative comments, scolding and tension makes kids eat worse.* Sharing a conversation,

having a laugh and, above all, enjoying your kids can become the focus of your family meals for the rest of the year.

5 The Thanksgiving meal is festive. No one will want to spoil the occasion by pressuring little Carol to take a bite of Brussels sprouts. *While exposing kids to new foods helps them learn to like them, pressuring to taste them often results in the opposite.* Remember that your job is to limit snacking, serve the food at set times and create a pleasant environment around eating. Your kids will do a great job exploring new foods when they frequently see you enjoying them but feel no pressure to eat them.

This Thanksgiving, invite your kids to join you at the table. Let them explore the bounty of the seasonal produce and practice appreciating the combination of simple and complex flavors. Remember to relax and enjoy our own meal instead of watching what and how much they are eating. Happy Thanksgiving!

— Natalia Stasenka, MS, RN, LDN
Pediatric Dietitian
www.tribecanutrition.com

Choose Plastics Carefully

Focus on plastics that come into contact with children's mouths, not just bottles but teething rings, toys, bibs etc. Choose products free of Bisphenyl acetate (BPA), phthalate and PVC (Polyvinylchloride).

Check the Number in the Recycling Icon

Avoid these:



PVC or polyvinylchloride found in food containers, plastic wrap, spray bottles and some bibs.



PS or polystyrene in Styrofoam coffee cups, meat trays, egg cartons and opaque plastic flatware.



“Other” may contain BPA or Polycarbonate. They are found in rigid, transparent water bottles, storage containers, cutlery and the lining of metal cans. NOTE: Some new, green, plastic alternatives marked #7 are safe.

Choose safer:



PET Polyethylene Terephthalate in water, soda bottles, oil and peanut butter containers. One time use only.



HDPE or high density polyethylene in milk jugs, water jugs and juice bottles.



LDPE or low density polyethylene in baby bottles, ZipLoc bags, grocery bags and plastic wrap.



PP or polypropylene in ice cream, yogurt and deli containers.

Or better yet **choose glass, porcelain or stainless steel** whenever possible to store foods and liquids.

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Plastics 101

WE USE PLASTICS EVERYDAY in dozens of different ways. They are cheap and convenient but we should be cautious of their use. Many are concerned that plastics are mixtures of synthetic chemicals not found in nature and could be hazardous to our health.

The toxicity of plastics is not well understood or adequately tested, but researchers do know that plastics leach into the food and water they hold. They contaminate our air, soil and the food chain and are linked to health effects such as brain and behavior changes.

It's nearly impossible to eliminate plastics from our life entirely, but we should try to minimize our exposure for our own health and the health of the environment by using less plastics, carefully choosing the plastics we do use and observing precautions when using them.

Precautions in Handling

- Scientists with the Environmental Working Group, a health research organization, caution that plastic containers, even those labeled microwave safe, should not be used in the microwave. Heat can break down plastics, releasing chemical additives into foods. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), has deemed plastic labeled microwave-safe to be suitable for microwave use, as no studies have proven health consequences due to their use. To be safe, use glass to microwave food and cover food with a paper towel, not plastic wrap.
- Don't reuse single use plastic bottles and containers; but always recycle them. Repeated use can scratch and break down the surface, releasing plastic chemicals. Choose BPA free or stainless steel reusable water bottles.
- Wash plastics by hand or on the top shelf of the dishwasher, further from the heating element to avoid break down.
- Choose glass or BPA free baby bottles with clear silicone nipples.



- Don't allow children to chew on hard plastic electronics such as remotes or cell phones, as they may be treated with fire retardants.
- Avoid plastic teething rings, which may have harmful chemicals that are released when chewed. Give babies natural teething soothers such as a frozen wash cloth.
- Look for toys made of natural materials such as wool, cotton and uncoated wood. Be sure soft plastic tub toys and books are BPA free.

- BPA can also be found in canned goods, aluminum and metal reusable drinking bottles, as they are lined with epoxy resins to combat corrosion. Foods available in a tetra pak (this looks like an oversized juice box), might be a slightly safer option but more testing is needed. Opt for fresh or frozen foods whenever possible.
- Use wooden cutting boards instead of plastic.



Most of the chemicals found in plastics, used for food and drink, are considered "safe", however, many researchers believe this only means that there hasn't been adequate testing in order to be proven to be "unsafe." *Scientific American* reports that a chemical called bisphenol-S (BPS) is a common replacement for BPA because it's thought to be "more resistant to leaching."

However, the chemical has its own set of problems. Many alternative chemicals have not been adequately tested because they are not required to be. A compound is considered safe (by FDA) until proven otherwise.

When it comes to children, with their small, developing bodies and their constant mouthing behaviors, it is best to use all plastics with caution.

For helpful information download *Eco-Cycle's Pocket Guide to Plastics* at: www.ecocycle.org/files/pdfs/pocket_guide_singleprint.pdf

— *Environmental Working Group, Mayo Clinic, Breast Cancer Fund, Huffington Post, Toxin Detective*

Leftover Turkey Chili

Vegetable oil.....	1 Tbsp	Chicken or turkey stock	4 cups
Onions, diced.....	2	Tomatoes, canned	1 (28 oz) can
Garlic, chopped.....	6 cloves	Barley or farro.....	¼ cup
Jalapeños.....	to taste	Cannellini beans, rinsed and drained	2 (15 oz) cans
Cumin.....	2½ Tbsp	Cilantro, fresh, chopped.....	½ cup
Chili powder.....	4 Tbsp	Salt.....	to taste
Cayenne.....	¼ tsp		
Oregano.....	1 tsp		
Leftover turkey, chopped ...	1½ pounds		

(May substitute cooked, ground turkey)

1. Heat the oil in a large soup pot. Add onions, garlic and jalapeños, cook until softened, about 10 minutes.
2. Stir in spices, turkey, broth, tomatoes, barley and beans. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer uncovered for about an hour.
3. Stir in the cilantro near the end of cooking time and season with salt.

Yield: 12 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable and protein/meat alternate

— Kaiser Permanente

Smooth and Creamy Hummus

Tahini.....	¼ cup
Lemon juice.....	¼ cup
Olive oil.....	2 Tbsp
Garlic, chopped.....	½-1 clove
Ground cumin.....	½ tsp
Salt.....	½ tsp
Garbanzo beans, drained.....	1 (15 oz) can
Water.....	2 Tbsp

1. Combine tahini and lemon juice in a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Blend about one minute, scrape down sides and bottom of bowl and process 30 seconds more, mixture will be very thick.
2. Add olive oil, garlic, cumin and salt, blend 30 seconds and scrape sides. Add garbanzo beans and water, process until smooth.

Yield: 6 servings for snack; 3 servings for lunch or dinner

Meets requirement for protein/meat alternate

— www.inspiredtaste.net

Activity Corner

THANKSGIVING ACTIVITIES

 Take a fall nature hike. Pick up some twigs, colorful autumn leaves and pine cones for your table decorations. They can be arranged in a bowl or glued to a red, orange or yellow paper plate.

 Adapt classic games for Thanksgiving. Turn “Duck, Duck, Goose” into “Chicken, Chicken, Turkey” or play “Tom Turkey Says” instead of “Simon Says.”

 Do the “Turkey Pokey.” Instead of putting your right arm in and out, put your right wing in and out. Instead of shaking it all about, gobble it all about. Continue with left wing, right and left drumstick, and tail feathers.

 Put all your little turkeys in groups of two and give them each a bandana or scarf to tuck in their back pocket. Each player must hop on one foot and flap one arm like a wing. The “turkeys” try to steal their opponent’s bandana, and protect their own. The game is over when all the bandanas have been pulled.

— Family Fitness at About.com

This Nutrition Edition is brought to you by:

CDA

Child Development Associates
Nutrition Program
180 Otay Lakes Road, Suite 300
Bonita, CA 91902

and is produced by:

**Contra Costa Child Care Council
Child Health & Nutrition Program**

Phone: (925) 676-6117

Fax: (925) 676-5829

E-Mail: nutrition@cocokids.org

Website: www.CoCoKids.org

Program Director..... Paula James
Co-Editor..... Donna Green, RD
Co-Editor..... Catherine Stafford

Food Funny Q: What did the teddy bear say when he was offered dessert?
A: “No thanks, I’m stuffed!”