

MEDIA RELEASE

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GIVE THANKS FOR GOOD FOOD – AND GOOD ORAL HEALTH

The Ontario Dental Association offers tips on a delicious – and nutritious – Thanksgiving Day meal

Toronto, ON – Planning and preparing for Thanksgiving Day can be hectic, and figuring out what food to serve can be just as taxing. With more people adopting alternative diets, it can be difficult to please everybody’s palates. While we can’t do anything about the stress that family get-togethers may cause, the Ontario Dental Association (ODA) has some tips to make planning your menu a little easier – and your mouth a lot healthier.

“Just like our bodies, our teeth and gums need a wide range of essential vitamins and minerals to stay strong and healthy,” says Dr. Harry Höediono, ODA President. “A balanced and diverse menu provides many nutrients to strengthen your teeth and gums, making them less susceptible to disease, including tooth decay.”

When planning your holiday menu, include foods that are nutritious and beneficial – not only for your overall health but for your oral health. Essential vitamins and minerals necessary for optimal oral health include calcium, phosphorous, magnesium and vitamins A, C and D. Here are a few ideas:

- Turkey is high in phosphorous, which is needed for tooth development. Phosphorus is stored in the teeth and bones and is instrumental in helping your body balance and absorb calcium and magnesium. While turkey is often a staple of Thanksgiving Day dinners, seafood and veal also contain high amounts of phosphorous.
- For meatless dishes, have a wide variety of beans, grains and nuts on hand for roasting, eating raw or incorporating into casseroles, vegetarian nut loaves or pasta dishes. Not only do these foods provide protein, they are also rich in magnesium, calcium and phosphorous.
- Throw some celery and carrots into your stuffing. Both vegetables contain beta carotene, which helps your body create vitamin A – a nutrient essential for building strong teeth.

- Potatoes are nutritious and have a proper balance of vitamins and nutrients. Milk products in mashed potato recipes provide calcium, which helps strengthen tooth enamel.
- Side dishes made with greens and winter vegetables – such as green beans, asparagus and butternut squash – are great sources of nutrients, including vitamins A and C, which help prevent soft, bleeding gums and help protect against oral cancer.
- Cranberries contain flavonoids that can hinder bacteria from sticking to the teeth and forming dental plaque.
- Pumpkin pies are a good source of vitamin C and supply the calcium needed in the development and re-mineralization of teeth.

“A nutritional and balanced menu can be both delicious and beneficial to your oral and overall health,” says Dr. Höediono. “Spending time with your family at Thanksgiving is more enjoyable when everyone is healthy and happy.”

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