Enjoying Thanksgiving With Osteoporosis

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Top Tips for Thanksgiving With Osteoporosis

Weak bones shouldn't stop you from joining in the Thanksgiving festivities. In fact, this traditional feast can be your ticket to better bone-health, if you make the right choices at the table. Of course, the holiday also brings some stresses and challenges that can be particularly hard on your osteoporosis, so be sure to take some smart precautions as you enjoy everything Thanksgiving has to offer.

Bone-Healthy Thanksgiving Foods

One of the easiest ways to stay on top of your bone health is to make smart food choices. Fortunately, a lot of traditional Thanksgiving fare is loaded with bone-strengthening vitamins and minerals:

- **Cruciferous veggies and leafy greens –** Vitamin K is one of the best compounds for healthy bones, since it blocks the formation of osteoclasts – cells that break down bone. Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, spinach and kale are excellent sources of vitamin K, but holiday staples like peas, carrots and salad are good choices, too.
- **Lean turkey –** The drumsticks and gravy may cancel out the nutritional aspects of turkey meat, but you can get a big bone boost if you stick to the white meat. Lean protein feeds your body's natural bone-building cycle, and will also keep your muscles working efficiently.
- **Potatoes of all sorts –** Potatoes are high in potassium, and a healthy level of potassium will regulate the acid level in your blood, and that protects the calcium content in your bones. Sweet potatoes also have a big helping of magnesium, which is just as crucial as calcium for bone health.
- **Squash and pumpkin –** High in magnesium, beta carotene and a host of other nutrients, these seasonal staples are great for your bones. However, pumpkin and squash seeds may be just as beneficial as the flesh itself: with a high amount of zinc, they can play an important role in preventing further bone loss.

It's just as important to avoid foods that induce bone loss as it is to include bone-friendly dishes, and that means you should go easy at the dessert table. The caffeine in coffee and tea will leach calcium away from your bones, and sugary foods limit calcium absorption. The effect is a double hit to your bone health, so stick to decaffeinated drinks and nibble on dried fruit and nuts (they offer up a heap of antioxidants) instead of pies and pastries.

Tips for Staying Mobile and Comfortable

Hosting a holiday requires a good deal of energy, momentum and strength, but that may put you at risk for over-exertion and dangerous fractures. Before the guests arrive, have a good plan in place, and listen to your body in order to avoid injury:

- **Prepare properly –** When you work out all the tasks well ahead of time, you can spread the work out and plug in important rests. Be sure to delegate some of the responsibilities, and if you're hosting the feast, it's a good idea to do a bit of prep and set the table the night before.

- **Slow down –** It’s no surprise that more kitchen accidents occur in hectic surroundings, so take a breather and don’t let too many cooks in the kitchen at once. Starting your preparations early in the day can help avoid undue stress, but you may also want to reduce the size of your menu, as well. Most importantly, don’t rush to make a specific deadline: if things are running a bit late, just go with it – your guests will surely forgive you.
- **Take a rest –** Back pain can interfere with your mood and mobility, so if your bone pain is flaring up, sit or lay down and practice some gentle stretching until you can restore your comfort. If you experience a sudden, severe pain, you may be dealing with a fracture, and will need to treat the injury with rest and likely some pain medication.

Osteoporosis is known as a silent disease, which makes it even more important to concentrate on diet and exercise every day, and learn when to rest your body. You may not have any symptoms to remind you that your bones are weak, so make a point to take time out to eat well, rest and exercise, regardless of the occasion.