

Nutrition for Heart Health



Winter 2024

ENGLISH

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Winter is an important season that holds significance in many aspects of our lives and health and provides us with an opportunity to slow down, reflect on our lifestyle and to set goals for better heart health. However, with the colder winter weather come coughs, colds and the flu season, plus, for some of us, winter weight gain. Keeping to a healthy diet will not prevent you from picking up winter illnesses, but it can help maintain your immune system to better protect you. And should you fall ill, a nutritious diet can help speed up your recovery. It is an important time to make sure you take care of yourself, stay on top of your diet, and keep yourself well nourished.

Winter is a time when the crops hibernate and rest until spring reawakens them, and so is it also important for your body to rest and slow down.



Winter Foods to make you happy:

- ✚ Fruits – choose sweet, sour, citrus, and serve warm.
- ✚ Root vegetables – roast in the oven, add to stews and soups, making you feel full and satisfied in winter.
- ✚ Whole grains, packed with taste, fibre, vitamins, such as B vitamins, including niacin, thiamine, and folate and minerals, such as zinc, iron, magnesium, and manganese.
- ✚ Nuts and seeds are a great source of winter protein and fats which we often crave more in the winter.
- ✚ Hot and warm beverages are good for winter (avoid caffeine though) and try different kinds of herbal teas, such as warming and calming teas that are good for you (cardamom, chamomile, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, orange peel)

Changing lifestyle behaviour and adopting heart healthy habits can be a challenging process, but it is achievable with the right approach and mindset.

To assist you in this process,



Set clear and specific goals: Define your goals and make sure they are realistic and achievable. Write them down and make them visible to remind you of what you want to achieve. As you plan your heart-health goals, I invite you to think small rather than big. Consider easy and simple healthy habits that you can practically apply to your lifestyle. These add up over time for a long-lasting impact. Keeping your heart healthy is key to leading a healthy lifestyle.



Create a plan: Develop a plan that outlines specific actions you will take to achieve your goals. Be sure to break down your plan into small, manageable steps to make it easier to follow through (use the 4-week interactive calendar).

Five Small Steps to Make Big Heart Health Changes

How to implement this practically into your lifestyle:

1. **Eat a heart-healthy diet:** Start by incorporating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats into your diet while reducing your intake of processed and high-fat foods. Consider following a Mediterranean-style diet, which has been shown to improve heart health.
2. **Move more:** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise most days of the week. You can start small, by taking short walks during your lunch break or using the stairs instead of the elevator. Over time, gradually increase the duration of your workouts. Get outside and try to get sunlight for 15-30 minutes if possible.
3. **Quit smoking:** If you smoke, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your heart health. Speak to your healthcare provider about cessation aids and strategies that may be helpful for you.
4. **Manage stress:** Chronic stress can have negative effects on your heart health. Take time to engage in activities that help you relax and de-stress, such as meditation, yoga, or spending time in nature.
5. **Monitor your blood pressure and cholesterol levels:** High blood pressure and cholesterol levels are major risk factors for heart disease. Talk to your healthcare provider about getting regular screenings and taking steps to manage these conditions if they are present. This may include lifestyle changes or medication as appropriate.



Eat Smart, Move More

“Eat smart, move more” is a simple yet effective motto for improving overall health and wellness. Here are some tips to help you incorporate this approach into your daily routine:

1. **Plan your meals:** Take some time to plan your meals and snacks for the week ahead. This will help you make healthier choices and avoid the temptation to grab fast food or unhealthy snacks on the go.
2. **Prep your food in advance:** Spend some time on the weekends preparing healthy meals and snacks that you can grab and go during the week. This will save you time and help you stay on track with your healthy eating goals.
3. **Find fun ways to move:** Exercise doesn't have to be boring or tedious. Find activities that you enjoy, such as dancing, hiking, or playing sports, and make them a regular part of your routine.
4. **Make movement a part of your daily life:** Look for opportunities to be active throughout the day, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator or going for a walk during your lunch break.
5. **Stay motivated:** Set realistic goals for yourself and track your progress. Celebrate your successes along the way and don't be too hard on yourself if you slip up occasionally. Remember that every small step you take towards eating smart and moving more is a step towards better health and wellness.
6. **General food guidelines that favour warmth, rest and rejuvenation for your winter foods and routine are:**
 - Keep hydrated,
 - Experiment with various herbs and spices
 - Try adding small amounts of sour fermented foods, traditionally used in winter in many cultures, and are useful during the winter.
 - For dessert, try warm/cooked apples with cinnamon or baked pears with cardamom.
7. **Focus on produce in season,** as there are numerous benefits from eating food that is local and seasonal. In-season produce is fresher and tastes better, as it has been naturally ripened and harvested at the right time and it is budget-friendly.





SEASONAL WINTER FOODS AVAILABLE IN SOUTH AFRICA (June, July, August)

Fruit: Apples, avocados, dates, grapefruit, kiwi, kumquats, lemons, limes, loquat, melon, naartjies, oranges, pawpaws or papayas, pears, pineapples, gooseberries, guavas, granadillas, tomatoes.

Fruit available all year: bananas, pineapples, apples, dried mango, dried figs, dried peaches.

Vegetables: Asparagus, artichokes, beetroot, broad (fava) beans, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, cucumber, endive, fennel, garlic, horseradish, Jerusalem artichokes, Kale, kohlrabi, mushrooms, parsnips, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, radishes, rhubarb, spinach, spring onion, squash, sweet potatoes, swiss chard, turnips, waterblommetjies, watercress.

Vegetables available throughout the year: butternut, carrots, cucumber, gem squash, lettuce, onion, potato, pumpkin, radish, sweet potato.

Use this 4-week calendar to help you track your progress and stay motivated!



The 4-week interactive calendar will assist you in incorporating at least one health action every day for four weeks, to help you make positive changes and achieve your health goals sustainably.

Your Interactive 4-Week Calendar with Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Goals

Use this interactive 4-week calendar with healthy eating and physical activity goals that build upon each other, one step at a time. I invite you to plan, keep track of you progress, write down any challenges, congratulate and reward yourself with wins by going to the movies etc and at the end of the 4 weeks, create your own plan towards healthier heart health. **Enjoy and have fun!**

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK 1	Start your day with a healthy breakfast . (Overnight Apple Pie Oats)	Take a 10-minute walk during lunch or in the afternoon.	Drink at least 8 glasses of water throughout the day (Infused water idea)	Replace sugary drinks with water or herbal tea .	Try a new healthy recipe for dinner . (Video: Beef & Pineapple Stirfry)	Take a 20-minute walk in nature.	Plan your heart-healthy meals and snacks for the week ahead.
WEEK 2	Incorporate more vegetables into your diet. (Quick Sweet Potato Hash)	Take a 30-minute walk during lunch or in the afternoon.	Reduce your intake of processed foods . (How to build healthy snacks)	Try a new type of physical activity, such as yoga or Pilates.	Pre-prepare a heart-healthy salad for lunch. (How to make a Jar Salad)	Take a 40-minute walk in nature. Make your own broth (Bone-broth: Chicken) and freeze.	Try a new heart-healthy recipe for lunch. (Freezer Frittata)
WEEK 3	Replace unhealthy snacks with versatile Oatmeal Bites .	Take a 50-minute walk during lunch or in the afternoon.	Incorporate more whole grains into your diet. (Video: Quinoa Tabbouleh)	Try a new type of exercise, such as strength training or swimming.	Drink at least 8 glasses of water throughout the day.	Take a 60-minute walk in nature. Make your own soup broth (Bone-broth: Beef) and freeze.	Make a heart-healthy and balanced meal for lunch . (Sheet Pan Meal)
WEEK 4	Replace red meat with lean protein sources, such as chicken, fish or tofu . (Chicken and Brown Rice Harvest Bowl)	Take a 70-minute walk during lunch or in the afternoon.	Try a new heart-healthy side-dish with dinner (serve with grilled fish) . (Roasted vegetable salad with lentils)	Incorporate more plant-based foods into your diet. (Garlic Swiss Chard with Chickpeas)	Prepare a heart-healthy pasta meal. (Heart-healthy Pasta & Beans)	Take a 80-minute walk in nature. Prepare a heart-healthy soup. (Butternut Squash and Apple Soup)	Celebrate your healthy eating and physical activity achievements with a special treat, such as a healthy dessert .

Your 4 – Week Calendar Recipes:

Week 1:

Overnight Apple Pie Oats | Infused Water Ideas | Beef and Pineapple Stirfry (video) | Planning Heart-healthy meals and snacks

Week 2:

Quick Sweet Potato Hash | How to Build Healthy Snacks | How to make a Jar Salad | Bone-Broth: Chicken | Freezer Frittata

Week 3:

Oatmeal Bites | Quinoa Tabbouleh (video) | Bone-Broth: Beef | Sheet Pan Meal

Week 4:

Chicken and Brown Rice Harvest Bowl | Roasted Vegetable salad with lentils | Garlic Swiss Chard with Chickpeas |

Heart-healthy Pasta & Beans | Butternut Squash and Apple Soup | Healthy Dessert

