



It can be tempting to reach for comfort foods over the winter months, but to stay well nourished and support your immune system, it is important to make healthy food choices. In winter, this can seem more challenging but here are some simple ways to look after your diet and health during the colder months.

1. Don't forget fruit and vegetables

In winter, with less seasonal produce available, it can be easy to eat less fruit and vegetables. However, we need to aim for 5-7 portions of fruit and vegetables each day throughout the year. Fruit and vegetables provide us with a variety of vitamins and minerals that keep us healthy and support our immune system. Try buying frozen fruit and vegetables instead of fresh, which are just as nutritious and often prechopped, saving you time in the kitchen!

2. Keep your cupboards stocked with essentials

Having well stocked kitchen cupboards makes it easier to make nutritious and tasty meals.

- Tinned tomatoes can be added to pasta dishes, soup, casseroles and curries.
- Tinned pulses are a great addition to salads, curries and stews.
- Tinned fish can be used as a filling for sandwiches and jacket potatoes or mixed with pasta. Oily fish such as salmon and sardines make great nutritious choices.
- Pasta, rice and grains can be used in a variety of dishes. Where possible choose wholegrain options for added fibre.
- Dried herbs and spices are an inexpensive way of adding flavour to your dishes.

3. Other shopping essentials

Food shopping is an important part of a healthy diet. As well as including some store cupboard essentials try including some of the following foods to help you build healthy meals.

- Frozen fruit can be added to porridge and yoghurt or served as a dessert.
- Frozen vegetables can be combined with eggs in an omelette, used as a side to main meals or added to soups and stews to add bulk.
- Eggs can be transformed into a range of dishes for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Boiled eggs can be kept in the fridge for a quick snack.
- Nuts and seeds are a great snack packed with healthy fats. They can also be added as a topping to yoghurt or porridge.
- Microwaveable rice/grains are great as a side to main meals. For a quick meal combine in a pan with some frozen vegetables and a protein source (try eggs or tinned fish).
- Natural yoghurt can be eaten as a snack on its own, or topped with fruit, nuts or cereal as a snack. It can be used as a marinade for meat, just add some of your favourite spices or made into a quick sauce – add some chives and lemon and serve with fish.

4. Preparation is key

Planning your meals in advance ensures you always have healthier options available and can save you time and money. There are lots of ways to do this, it might be planning your snacks for the day ahead, making a weekly meal plan with your family, or cooking extra portions and freezing the extras (simply defrost when you need it).

5. Get enough Vitamin D

The majority of our vitamin D is made from exposure to sunlight. However, from October to March we need to eat foods rich in vitamin D or take a supplement that contains vitamin D. Vitamin D mainly helps us to absorb calcium, keeping our bones strong. It also supports a healthy immune system. Vitamin D is found in oily fish, eggs, offal and fortified foods. If you cannot get enough vitamin D from diet alone, a 10µg vitamin D supplement is recommended.

6. Rethink your drink

Regularly drinking more than the recommended maximum weekly limits of alcohol (11 standard drinks for women, 17 standard drinks a week for men) can damage your health, increasing risk of many health conditions such as liver disease, high blood pressure, heart disease and obesity. If you drink alcohol, try to drink no more than 6 standard drinks in one sitting and have 2 to 3 alcohol free days per week.



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