



## Staying Well in the Changing Seasons

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With the cool snap in the air these days, there can be no denying – fall is on it's way. For some, this is a great thing - an invitation to be more active as the fresh temperatures make it so pleasant to be outdoors. For others, it can be the start of a challenging time as the days grow shorter and daylight begins to diminish.

Whatever your own response to the shift in the seasons, there are simple steps you can take to maintain your wellbeing and help yourself stay well during the coming cold weather. Here are a few ideas:

### **Eat with the Seasons**

Something magical happens in the autumn and it's not just the gorgeous color of the leaves on the trees. It's the fact that many of the seasonal vegetables offer up a similar array of colors with the added benefit of being nutritional powerhouses. Take advantage of the food that is grown and harvested this time of year – we are meant to be eating it!

On offer are not only the lovable old standards of red tomatoes and butternut and acorn squashes but a delightful variety of colorful heirloom tomatoes as well as utterly delicious newer squashes – Kabocha, Carnival, Delicata and more. Happily, all of these can be easily prepared in about half an hour. You can't do better for nutrition than eating food that is locally grown, so head over to a nearby farmers market or keep your eyes peeled for a roadside stand. These squashes and tomatoes offer up a healthy dose of Vitamin C and fiber as well as many other vitamins and minerals. And if the idea

of preparing a new vegetable feels intimidating – do a quick internet search and you will find a variety of super simple recipes. There is no such thing as eating too many vegetables, so get yourself a bucket full and dive in!

## Grab Some Morning Sunlight

As the days grow shorter, it is a good idea to make a point of spending extra time outdoors. Getting some extra sunlight is important for everyone and particularly important for the many people who experience SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) which usually arrives in the autumn and can last all winter. SAD triggers symptoms such as depression and lack of energy and is a response to a lack of natural sunlight. However, there is a great and simple thing you can do for yourself whether you struggle with SAD or not - expose yourself to sunlight first thing in the morning. That's right – simply step outdoors and let the morning light pour all over you.

This simple action will trigger the release of serotonin – a neurotransmitter that regulates moods, memory, sleep and even appetite. This serotonin release will then effect your body's production of melatonin that helps control sleep and wake cycles. With this single action in the morning, you can kickstart a balanced internal chemistry that will leave you both feeling great during the day and appropriately tired at night.

## Support Your Immune System

As everyone knows, it's harder to feel healthy in times of really cold weather and low light. But there is a way to give yourself the best chance to stay well during the fall and winter by bolstering your immune system right now.

This can be done in a variety of simple ways: by eating more citrus to boost your intake of Vitamin C, by making sure your digestive system (where 25% of your immune system lies) is balanced and strong through a daily dose of probiotics, as well as by staying active. Research has shown that even moderate exercise done regularly will drastically reduce the number of colds and flu you might get this winter. In other words, it's a good time to get out there and get moving!

## Stay Friendly

Use the cooler weather as a chance to reconnect with the people you enjoy. Invite a pal for a hike or walk or find a place where a gathering of beloveds can share of campfire. There is nothing that supports wellbeing like social connections and knowing you are loved.

