

Beat the blues

The cold winter days are not over yet, with the coldest probably yet to come. Even though we're on the home stretch, August is a time when it's easy for the 'winter blues' to creep in. So what can you do to keep your mood lifted until spring arrives?

According to dietitian and nutrition writer, Karen Kingham, the 'winter blues' is usually characterised by a lack of motivation, low energy levels and a tendency to overeat.

"Once you're feeling this way, it can be a real challenge to lift yourself out of it. My advice is to start with some simple things you can do every day to help improve your motivation and keep your body in shape," says Karen. "Of course, if your mood doesn't improve it is important you speak to someone – don't battle the blues alone."

Karen's tips for maintaining a healthy diet this winter:

- 🍏 Eat an apple a day – an apple has more antioxidants than half a punnet of blueberries and more than twice the antioxidant content of brewed tea
- 🍏 Increase your intake of nutrient-rich foods – try a small handful of nuts each day and replace refined grains with whole grains
- 🍏 Get moving – even if it's just a brisk walk around the block, getting your body moving is a great way to stay positive during winter
- 🍏 Pack a healthier snack – a muesli bar has 61% more kilojoules, 20 times the fat, 52% less dietary fibre and almost three times more salt than the humble apple

Karen also says, "Eat more winter super foods":

- 🍏 Apples - are high in antioxidants, have a low GI for long lasting energy, and are a good source of potassium, calcium, iron and vitamins B & C
- 🍏 Citrus fruits - oranges, mandarins, grapefruit and lemons - are a great source of vitamin C, an antioxidant vitamin vital for a healthy immune system that can help protect us from winter ills
- 🍏 Ginger - like garlic, ginger may improve the immune system's ability to fight infections
- 🍏 Soup - it's hot, tasty and full of nutritious vegetables. It also contains water which we often don't drink enough of in winter. Soup before a meal fills you up which can help reduce your total kilojoules too
- 🍏 Sweet potato - has a lower GI than regular potatoes which is great for blood sugar control and energy levels plus will keep you feeling fuller for longer

About Karen Kingham

Karen Kingham loves good food. A dietitian and freelance nutrition writer, she is passionate about sharing her knowledge to help people enjoy the benefits of great tasting food that brings both pleasure and wellbeing to their lives.

As a busy working mum of two, Karen understands the challenges of preparing healthy food for a family but believes that with just a little knowledge you don't have to compromise between convenience and nutrition.

Karen is the author of several healthy cookbooks and is the nutrition writer for the new BBC Australian Good Food magazine.

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