

The Health Benefits of Fenugreek



The Fenugreek plant is a member of the legume family native to North Africa, Southern Europe and Western Asia. The leaves and the tiny bean shaped seeds have been used as medicine for aeons, as well as being a traditional ingredient in many culinary dishes from India to Ethiopia. The name is derived from the Greek words *Foenum-Graecum*, translated as Greek Hay. This is because it was discovered that cattle preferred to eat hay that was mixed with fenugreek.

Fenugreek is slightly bitter and pungent, and has a distinct maple flavour so it is often used as a maple substitute alongside sugar in sweet syrups. In India the leaves are used in many different types of curry and in Ethiopia the most popular spice mix known as Berbere, contains Fenugreek seeds and is the central ingredient in most dishes.

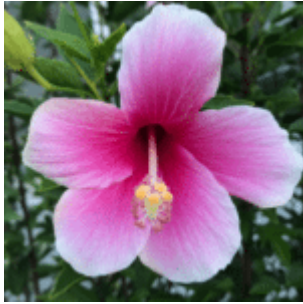
The leaves and the seeds have great medicinal properties including the ability to lower cholesterol and treat diabetes due to its affect on insulin; the hormone that governs the uptake of glucose into the cell. Fenugreek is also a popular digestive, often used to reduce flatulence and relieve digestive discomfort.

Fenugreek is widely known to have oestrogen-promoting properties and can increase milk production in breast-feeding women and improve libido in men and women with low sexual desire. Consuming fenugreek can also increase your metabolism, improve bowel regularity and sooth a sore throat due to its mucilaginous (gel-like) properties.

As well as using Fenugreek in your cooking, the seeds can sprouted and eaten raw for a slightly spicy additive to your salad or simmered in water and used as a therapeutic tea.

Due to its potent medicinal properties, it is wise to consult with a natural health practitioner before using it to treat any particular health condition.

Take Home Health Tips For Winter



Winter is upon us and with it comes a whole other level of care we need to take for ourselves to ensure we don't end up home in bed with a nasty cold or flu.

The extra stress that cold weather places on our bodies can result in all sorts of symptoms and feelings and interestingly, there is actually a science behind it.

For the human body to function properly, the temperature of our vital organs, ie the heart, brain, kidneys, liver and lungs, need to remain at approximately 37°C. When the temperature outside our body drops, our body has to work harder to keep its own core temperature in the healthy range. This starts with vaso-constriction, a natural response from the hypothalamus to keep the blood nearest to our inner organs, hence why our extremities get cold first. After this we may experience goosebumps, another natural response from the body to stay insulated by the air closest to our skin.

Long periods of the body working to keep warm internally places stress on the organs and immune system leading to lack of focus, productivity, motivation and a drop in mood.

In a nut shell, feeling cold can prevent us from feeling good!

So here are some take home tips to combat this:

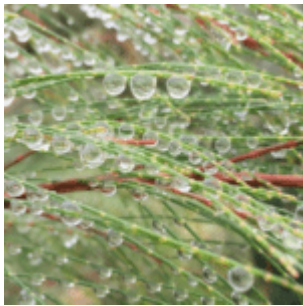
- Take extra care with your food preparation making sure you consume lots of warm foods. It's good to know that meals that are well cooked require less work to break down on the inside, so the bodies organs can focus on other areas of function needed to cope with the seasonal changes.
- Incorporate a few spices into your cooking. Certain spices such as cumin, coriander, turmeric and black pepper are particularly warming to the blood and circulation and also stimulate digestion. This is great if the digestive system is a bit run down from the cold and not functioning as it normally would.
- Physically keep your body warm - Whatever your fancy, winter woolies, heating, exercise, hot water bottles etc, make sure your body is warm and toasty to prevent any stress on your immune and endocrine systems.
- Drink warm liquids such as homemade bone or vegetable broths, teas and light soups - these are immune building as well as warming from the inside out.
- Eat lots of chilli - if you can handle it - chilli is a blood warmer and great for immunity also; and
- Try to incorporate exercise into your every day (even just a simple walk) as a

commitment to keeping your circulation on track. Movement is a great way to stay warm inside.

Above all, enjoy looking after yourself and stay well this winter.

Image credit to Denise Evans ~ The 'Pink Ice' Hibiscus flower. Hibiscus tea is full of vitamin C and great for the immune system during winter.

Boost Your Immune Health This Winter



As the cooler months roll in, so too do the bacteria and viruses that cause the common winter ailments like colds and the flu. It's almost impossible to avoid exposure to these bugs, which makes it really important to keep your immune system in top shape going into winter.

There are many things you can do to keep your immune system healthy and reduce your risk of getting sick. I've listed below my top five food and lifestyle recommendations to embrace this winter.

1. Make vegetables and fruits the foundation of your eating, and you will be nourishing your body with the key nutrients it needs for a strong immune system. The key is to eat a wide variety everyday and choose as many different colours as you can. Vitamin C is a key nutrient as it plays an important role in the mobilisation of your immune system defences. Foods like citrus fruits, capsicum, broccoli, strawberries and kiwifruit are rich in Vitamin C.
2. Add in some special immune boosting foods like ginger, citrus, garlic, shiitake and reishi mushrooms and turmeric as they provide nutrients and compounds with amazing medicinal properties. For example Shiitake and Reishi mushrooms contain beta-glucans which are known for their immune enhancing properties while garlic has antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties.
3. Make sure you get enough zinc daily. Zinc helps infection-fighting white blood cells to

be deployed at the first sign of a disease-causing invader, such as a virus or bacteria. Zinc containing foods include meat, eggs, seafood, nuts (especially cashews) and seeds (eg pumpkin and sesame)

4. Gut health is critical in maintaining a strong immune system. Your gastrointestinal tract contains approximately 70% of your immune system, so ensuring your gut is populated with plenty of beneficial micro-organisms ('good bugs') is central to maintaining optimal immune function. You can boost your gut health by including fermented or cultured foods like natural yoghurt, sauerkraut, kefir, miso and kimchi (that contain friendly live bacteria or probiotics) in your diet each day.
5. Sleep and rest is so important for preventing illness and helping the body to heal when sick. Make sure you are getting adequate sleep and when the first signs of a cold or ailment appear give your body time to heal by resting.

By Natalie Harms

For more great articles from Natalie visit her website here [Natalie Harms Nutritionist](#)

'Keeping it Real' with Natalie Harms



Everyone seems to have an opinion about what the best diet is or what foods you should or shouldn't be eating! Every day there are articles in the news or on social media espousing the virtues of different "diets", superfoods, nutrients and ways to improve health. Everyone's an expert and it can be very confusing!

As a nutritionist, I often get asked:

What should I eat and what should I stop eating?

What about Paleo, Low Carbohydrate or Vegan diets?

Should I cut out dairy, gluten, grains, potatoes, fruit?

The choices we make about what to eat are influenced by many factors including peer pressure, taste preferences, family, culture, religion, ethics/values, income, education, allergies, illness and wellbeing.

No matter what has influenced the style of eating you follow, there is one fundamental principle that we all should follow and that is to eat REAL FOOD.

Real food is food in its most natural state. It is unprocessed or with very little processing and is also known as whole food.

When you make real food the cornerstone of your eating, everything you eat is full of the macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates and fats), micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and fibre your body needs to function and stay healthy. It has NO added fat, sugar, salt or additives. You will also be more likely to consume the recommended 5 servings of vegetables each day.

Real food is found in your own garden, at farmers markets, from wholefoods providers like Affordable Wholefoods, at your local fruit and vegetable shop, your butcher or fishmonger, and mostly around the edge of the supermarket.

This way of eating also helps to eat seasonally which means you eat fresh foods that have been grown locally in season and not stored or transported for long periods of time. It also increases the variety of fresh foods you'll consume.

And of course by choosing real, whole foods you will naturally reduce your intake of processed foods and manufactured foods that have become the norm and are less healthy.

Real food includes: vegetables; fruits; fresh herbs; whole grains with no or minimal processing like oats, brown rice and buckwheat; unprocessed meats; fish; nuts and seeds; eggs; minimally processed dairy; beans and legumes.

Make real, whole foods the cornerstone of your eating and your body will love you!

By Natalie Harms

Food and Nutrition Specialist

To learn more about Natalie you can visit her website or Instagram page here.

A Day in the Life of Nutrition Student Tristen Van De Kley



We recently got together with Tristen Van De Kley from [Balanced Body Nutrition](#) to talk about life as a full-time student, food blogger and lover of wholefoods and healthy living. Tristen is one of our regular contributors on the [Affordable Wholefoods](#) blog sharing inspiring articles and recipes. Here's what she had to say....

How do you like to start your day on waking?

The first thing I do after waking up is drink a glass of warm water with either the juice of 1/2 lemon or a tablespoon of Apple Cider Vinegar. Not only does it rehydrate you after an overnight fast, but the warm water stimulates the vagus nerve (which extends from the brain to the heart, stomach and intestines), to increase blood circulation and promotes digestion. The ACV or lemon helps to flush toxins, maintain healthy pH levels and improve insulin sensitivity, and both are a good source of potassium.

What's your idea of a healthy breakfast?

A healthy nourishing breakfast really impacts your energy, mood and hunger for the day. I always aim to include a serve of veggies or at least fruit in my breakfast for fibre, vitamins and minerals. I'll also include healthy fats such as whole eggs, avocado or seeds and nuts to keep my blood sugar stable and feeling fuller for longer. I often exercise first thing in the morning (before breakfast) so I'll either have a pre-prepared veggie packed omelette or frittata and include sweet potato or a piece of gluten free toast if I have exercised, or an oat or quinoa porridge or muesli with berries, cinnamon and some grated zucchini (it sounds weird but trust me it's delicious!).

What types of foods do you feel support you in times when the pressure is on with exams or assessments?

Aside from following my usual whole foods diet I really try to avoid sugary foods during study periods and exams, even though this is often a time where we crave sugar due to stress. If I'm really craving sweets I'll enjoy a few squares of dark chocolate. I'll often aim for a lower carb higher fat diet to sustain energy and focus, and have also experimented with a ketogenic diet to improve mental clarity and focus during exams, although this is something I would only recommend under the supervision of a qualified nutritionist/dietitian.

How do you like to relax or unwind?

Watching a movie, taking a relaxing walk in nature and a little meditation. Anything that helps me to stop, sit still or switch off my mind.

Do you have any dietary advice you could offer anyone who is looking to start studying at College or University?

It can be difficult to juggle student life (and budgets) particularly when you've just started, so keep it simple and plan and prepare ahead so you're not skipping meals or grabbing processed foods when you're pressed for time. Focus on a whole foods diet to get a variety of nutrients and eat regular balanced meals to sustain energy and focus. Whole food staples like oats, legumes, veggies and fruit are relatively inexpensive, particularly when you buy in-season. Cook a few extra serves of dinner that can be eaten for lunches over the next few days. Meals like vegetarian legume stews, one-tray roasted fish/chicken/meat with veg, frittatas and salads bulked out with chickpeas and chicken or tuna are easy to make ahead. Nuts and seeds are a great snack to take to uni with you as the protein and healthy fats sustain energy. Prioritise your nutrition as it plays a huge impact on energy, sleep and focus, all of which are so important as a student.

Here are some of the fabulous contributions from Tristen on our blog.

For the raw foodie or health nut - No Bake Paleo Bars

The winter dreamer - Pumpkin, Carrot & Ginger Soup (GF/DF/V)

The Vegetarian lover - Quinoa & Lentil Burgers with Turmeric Tahini Sauce

The bruncher with a sweet tooth - Banana Berry Breakfast Loaf

and last but not least, those with a keen interest in the Health Benefits of Herbs & Spices

The Wheat Tribe: Khorasan, Spelt and Rye



With the vast array of grain flours now available for us to choose from when baking, no wonder we may find ourselves in some confusion. There is wheat, khorasan (kamut), spelt, rye, barley, emmer wheat and another ancient wheat grain called einkkorn. In this article, I'll discuss the benefits of some of the healthiest ancient grains, **wheat, spelt, khorasan and rye.**

It's important to know what flour may be more suited to the baking that you are doing as each flour has its own properties, mainly due to its gluten content. *Gliadin* and *glutenin* are two molecules that make up gluten, which is the type of protein found in grains. *Gliadin* forms a sticky mass when in contact with water as it is soft and spongy. *Glutenin* forms a compact mass when it absorbs water, making it strong and elastic.

Australian grown wheat is known as 'hard wheat' as it is high in gluten with a higher percentage of glutenin than other grains making it the perfect bakers flour. It is highly versatile and is ideal for bread as well as for baking cakes and biscuits.

Khorasan is an ancient wheat also known Oriental wheat or Kamut and is thought to have originated in Egypt. Khorasan is a much larger grain than wheat and is higher in minerals, vitamins and fats and has up to 40% more protein. This makes it a super energy source plus gives it its unique rich and nutty flavour. Khorasan flour has a similar ratio of the two types of gluten making it ideal for any kind of baking and along with wheat, it doesn't lose its texture with freezing.

Spelt is another type of ancient grain, also called Dinkle wheat and contains a similar amount of gluten to wheat, however the type of gluten differs. Spelt, along with durum wheat, has a higher level of *gliadin* than wheat, which means it is much more soluble in water. This makes it much easier to digest and renders the nutrients more readily available for absorption by the body. The higher fibre content in spelt also aids in the breakdown of gluten in the body.

The *gliadin* level in Spelt and durum wheat flour means that the dough is softer, and stickier but not elastic. This is why spelt is often used to make sourdough as the fermentation process gives the bread rise and durum wheat is better for pasta and is mainly made into semolina.

Rye is another member of the wheat tribe, along with barley and is high in *gliadin*, low in *glutanin* and has a much lower total gluten content. Due to this, rye flour is better tolerated by those sensitive to gluten compared with other gluten flours, however this tasty flour tends to be dense and heavy and is often mixed with other gluten flours. Spelt and rye flour are both good alternatives for people who cannot tolerate hard wheat.

When we choose wholegrain stoneground flours, the germ with its tasty oils are left in the

flour to give the nutty and slightly aromatic flavour we love. While refined white flour is mostly starch, wholegrain flour is a concentrated source of vitamins, minerals, and protein, making it an ideal choice for our nutrition and for our tastebuds.

By Jesabe Warner - Naturopath

Affordable Wholefoods stocks a range of products from these grains including:

Spelt Products

Organic (bio-dynamic) Spelt Grain

Organic Stoneground Wholegrain Spelt Flour

Organic Unbleached Plain Spelt Flour

Sustainable White Spelt Flour (plain)

Rye Products

Organic Rye Grain

Organic Rye flour

Khorasan Products

Organic Khorasan Flour

RELATED RECIPES

Spelt and Pumpkin Bread - a healthy spelt bread recipe

Spelt Pasta Elbows with Lemon Parsley Pesto

Spelt Soft Dough Pretzels

Mini Mexican Bean Pies - using organic khorasan flour

Post Christmas Body Blues



For many people the Christmas season sees a bit of overindulgence in all those things that can leave us feeling sluggish, bloated, and a little on the heavy side. Not only is this a result of perhaps eating a little too much food, but it can also be from the types of food we find ourselves eating at this time.

So how do we turn around this dreaded Christmas pattern that sees a fad of detox programs and healthy new years resolutions going through the roof come January? Resolutions that are often quickly forgotten by February and back we fall into the same cycles. Is it possible we can make a change in our approach to the Christmas holiday festive season that doesn't leave us feeling flat or down and needing a pick me up?

When we consider the true meaning of the season, a time to get together with friends and family, to celebrate relationships, enjoy the beautiful summer in the southern hemisphere or cosy winters in the northern hemisphere.... wouldn't it be far more enjoyable to nourish ourselves (in every way) during this time, rather than load our bodies with overly sweet and rich foods?

Its a pretty simply equation when we think about it. To get the most out of the season, we need to put back into our bodies that which will support them to feel super light, nourished and vital. So here are some of our tips for the ongoing festive season (and for a healthy recovery for those who may have overindulged).

- Be consistent - don't see festive get togethers as being different from any other meal you would eat at home with yourself or your family throughout the year. Sure you can prepare special dishes for the occasion, but that doesn't mean you have to eat more than what you normally would. Keep it light and eat only what your body needs.
- Keep to preparing wholesome dishes made out of healthy and nourishing wholefoods.
- Maintain your exercise rhythm over the holiday period by getting together and exercising outdoors with friends and family. Take long walks in nature together, swim at the beach, toboggan down the snow slopes....keep active in your social get togethers and your body will love you for it.
- Drink plenty of water - an absolute must for vitality and good health.

Of course these are things we need to be working on year round when it comes to our health and well-being, but the more solid they become in our daily lives, the more steady we

will find ourselves throughout the festive season present and future.

Christmas, Food & Family



A beautiful sharing from Naturopath Jesabe Warner on Christmas, food and family. What Jes shares here is timeless...that Christmas is the 'perfect opportunity to tell those around us what we love about them, to share our appreciation of ourselves and each other'. With all the Christmas emotions going on at this time of year, it seems apt to share this message as we bring 2017 to a close.

Christmas is a time to celebrate and appreciate our close relationships, welcome new family members and to reflect on the challenges and achievements of the past year.

For Australians, this time of the year has the longest days, with sunshine that stretches well into the evening. Friends and family gather together to share thoughts, food and laughs, to tell stories and to connect more deeply with each other.

Being able to sit and share delicious food that nourishes our bodies and provides us with a beautiful opportunity to be open and share our reflections on the year with each other, what we are proud of and what we found challenging. It is also a perfect opportunity to tell those around us what we love about them, to share our appreciation of ourselves and each other.

It has been a huge year, with its joyful times and hectic moments and as the year comes to an end and before the new year begins, it will greatly help our peace of mind and sense of well being to take the time to appreciate everything in our lives. Our friends, children, partners and animals, our homes and the places we work. It's a time to reassess what's important to us, to let go of what does not support us and to take care of ourselves and the people we love.

True Body Connection with Kerrie Cox



This week we caught up with Mind Body Nutrition Coach Kerrie Cox. Kerrie is the founder of 'True Body Connection' a weight loss, management and lifestyle practice for health and well-being. We spoke with Kerrie about her work and how it relates to the wholefoods diet.

Kerrie is also the contributor of our latest 'Recipe of the Week'...Raw Mango & Macadamia Slice...enjoy!

AW: What does True Body Connection mean?

KC: True Body Connection is about connecting into our body wisdom and living from this place with a more in-depth understanding of what supports us best. We are all so very different, our body responds differently to foods, exercise, stress and the many influences we experience in life. It's about slowing down with food, choosing quality which automatically reduces quantity... It's about giving yourself the grace and space to nurture yourself and to bring joy and pleasure back into your life...and very importantly it's about learning how to reduce stress in your life, naturally.

AW: How does this relate to a wholefoods diet?

KC: When you come from a place of connection with your body and truly slow down with food and taste what you are eating, you will automatically change the way you eat and what you eat. As you build trust in your choices, you won't need to rely on a diet to direct your eating patterns (which rarely work), as you will be able to feel what is supportive for your body.

When you provide your body with good nutrition through healthy wholefoods in the morning and lunch, you will rarely be called to binge in the afternoon. The higher quality foods you choose, the less quantity you need, the healthier your body will become and the better you feel.

AW: As a Mind Body Nutrition Coach, what are some of the benefits you see from this approach to diet and well-being?

KC: I absolutely love what I am able to bring to others. This approach is very different to your main stream diet and exercise plans which focus more on restriction and punishment.

By taking a whole 'Mind Body Nutrition' approach to our diet we are able connect into our own body's wisdom and make more supportive choices for ourselves that can have a profound effect on our health and how we feel about ourselves. This can also have a profound effect on our families and children and how they too will develop their own relationships with food.

Some of the benefits I have seen include more sustainable and consistent eating patterns (less yo-yo), increased confidence and self love, weight loss that happens naturally, greater vitality, decreased stress and increased joy.

I have also seen clients connect with lifelong un-supportive patterns and by understanding where these patterns have formed, they have been able to clear them completely and establish far more supportive patterns which are not only related to food, but also to life.

To learn more about Kerrie and True Body Connection you can visit her website [here](#).

Living A Gluten Free Lifestyle with Casey-Lee Lyons



We recently caught up with Casey-Lee Lyons of Live Love Nourish to ask her a few questions about wholefoods and living a gluten free lifestyle. Here's what she had to say....

AW: As someone who has been enjoying a wholefoods diet for many years now, what are some of the benefits you have experienced personally?

CL: For me personally, when I transitioned to a whole foods diet free from packaged food, processed ingredients, sugar, gluten etc the most profound changes for me were increased energy, reduced bloating, I lost that 3pm afternoon slump and my digestion improved

immensely. I felt lighter, healthier and happier.

AW: How difficult was it for you to transition to a gluten free diet and what tips would you give to others who are considering going gluten free?

CL: Like anything new, it takes a little bit of time to adjust but my top tip is to **keep it simple** and stick to whole and real food. Rather than trying to swap packaged food for the gluten free version (which is still processed and possibly contains added sugars) try to stick to fresh natural and whole food (such as vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry, seafood, nuts, seeds etc); **food as close to its natural state as possible**. My other tip is to educate yourself so you feel confident with making the best choices. Get familiar with what ingredients contain gluten and next time you are at the supermarket check food labels to identify common foods that contain gluten so you have awareness of where gluten can be hiding.

AW: In your role as a naturopath/nutritionist, what are some of the symptoms to look out for when one might be experiencing a gluten sensitivity or intolerance?

CL: There are many signs and symptoms someone can experience if they have a gluten sensitivity or intolerance and because everyone is unique this can vary. Some common signs and symptoms I see where gluten sensitivity/ intolerance may be suspected might include digestive issues (such as bloating, gas, constipation, diarrhoea, wind, abdominal discomfort, reflux etc) low energy, fatigue, feeling tired after eating, poor skin health, brain fog, mood imbalances, reduced immunity, to name a few.

I do believe it is important to look at the whole picture (and not just symptoms alone) so if you do suspect you have a sensitivity or intolerance to gluten I really encourage you to see a qualified health practitioner who can rule out medical conditions and help you address your individual body as well as ensure your diet is well balanced and right for you. A lot of the time, if gluten is an issue, the gut typically needs healing and support and this is where individualised support can be incredibly beneficial.

AW: As a gluten free recipe creator, what are some of your favourite every day recipes that can be modified to gluten free and still taste delicious?

CL: Eating gluten free doesn't mean boring or tasteless, in fact I make gluten free recipes for my friends and family (even those who are not on a gluten free diet) all of the time and they love it! Some of my favourite everyday recipes include:

Grain free bread - I make a grain free loaf of bread and keep it sliced in my freezer. It's a gluten free version is nutrient rich and also provides a source of protein and healthy fat to keep you fuller for longer.

Banana muffins - Having homemade, healthy snacks in your home or at work really helps to make a healthy choice when it's snack time.

In my latest recipe e-book I share 80 of my favourite gluten free (as well as dairy and

refined sugar free) recipes with some of my favourites including gluten free anzac biscuits, carrot cake as well as my family's favourite, satay sauce.

About Casey-Lee

Casey-Lee Lyons is a naturopath, nutritionist, recipe developer and founder of Live Love Nourish, a refreshing online wellness resource for living your healthiest and best self. Casey-Lee is passionate about inspiring health and happiness through easy-to-understand nutritional and lifestyle advice and specialises in simple real food recipes free from gluten, dairy and sugar.

Stomach Acid: A Common Factor in Gut Troubles



So many of us these days experience some kind of gut trouble. Whether it be **bloating, burping, gut pain, low appetite, indigestion, impaired immunity, irregular bowel movements or food sensitivities**. These conditions often come with associated symptoms of tiredness, mood disorders and skin conditions such as acne. The treatment of these conditions may be something as simple as having adequate stomach acid. This simple solution in our stomach is crucial to the uptake of many of our minerals including iron, magnesium, selenium, manganese, molybdenum, chromium and zinc and is needed to digest our proteins. It also limits the number of pathogenic bacteria from passing into your digestive tract.

There are many factors that contribute to low stomach acid and these include many medications, inadequate exercise, dehydration, zinc deficiency, poor sleep, worry, stress, poor eating habits and older age. An infection in the stomach of *Helicobacter pylori* will greatly reduce stomach acid. Having low stomach acid can cause weak nails, thinning hair, iron deficiency, fatigue, food allergies, heartburn, bloating, burping, candida overgrowth, diarrhoea or constipation or both. Low stomach acid leads to multiple nutrient deficiencies and causes an imbalance of your beneficial gut flora.

The first way we can help to manage our stomach acid levels begins with our teeth. We

need to chew our food until it would be the same as if put through the blender. This places much less strain on our stomach to churn and break the food down. It also makes the nutrients in our food more available to be absorbed and reduces the risk of particles of food entering our small intestine, where it can cause further trouble.

Perhaps the most important factor in looking after our stomach acid is by nurturing and supporting our nervous system. This means taking time out daily to rest, relax and breath, especially when eating our food. The more our body is relaxed, the better it can release stomach acid and the many digestive enzymes in order to digest our food efficiently and easily.

Some simple ways to increase our stomach acid is to:

- Drink the juice of half a lemon or 1 tbsp of apple cider vinegar in 200mls of fresh, clean water 1/2 hr before each meal.
- Always sit down when eating any food to allow your digestive tract to relax.
- Take some slow, deep breaths for a few minutes before eating your meal.
- Avoid drinking more than 1/2 cup of fluids within 1/2 hr of eating.
- Avoid drinking caffeine within an hour of eating.
- Chew your foods until they are completely mush before swallowing.
- Include fennel seeds with your meal or simply chew on some afterwards to improve digestion.
- Add ginger to your meal or drink ginger tea between meals.
- Make sure you getting enough zinc in your diet from eating foods such as pepita's and brazil nuts.

Of course, eating a diet that is rich in whole foods that are natural and unprocessed will greatly improve your digestion and therefore your overall wellbeing. Happy eating!

Jesabe Warner

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods.

Transitioning To a Wholefoods Diet



Eating a diet rich in wholefoods is a great way to increase our vitality as well as promote

deeper rest and relaxation when our bodies need it. When transitioning to a wholefoods diet, it often takes time to make the necessary changes, but it is certainly time worth taking to ensure we lay a solid foundation that won't be easily strayed from.

Here are a few recommendations for moving away from processed/fast foods:

No pressure - The old saying 'Rome wasn't built in day' is most certainly true in this case. Don't put pressure on yourself to be perfect, but rather let yourself be and observe your relationship with the foods and the patterns of eating you are wanting to let go of. Let yourself feel how different foods impact on your body, as this awareness is a great starting point and also a good motivator to be able to make the changes you want to make.

Get inspired with new recipes - in the exception of a raw food diet, wholefoods generally take a bit of time and effort to prepare. For those who enjoy cooking this can be a great thing, but for others who aren't so keen, it's a good enough reason to give up and head for the easy fix packet or take out option. One thing you can do in this situation is to get inspired with new recipes that will keep you motivated and on track. We recommend signing up to a few recipe blogs (ours is awesome of course) that send out new recipes regularly or purchasing a couple of good cookbooks.

Shop in your local wholefoods store - buying from bulk foods stores that don't sell processed and packaged foods is a great way of supporting your wholefoods diet and also has a bonus effect on the environment by contributing less packaging waste in our local communities.

Combine your diet with exercise - Regular exercise and a wholefoods diet is always a winning combination when we are looking to increase our vitality and well-being. The two go hand in hand and quite often one motivates the other.

Be your own best friend - It's important that we are patient and supportive with ourselves throughout any process of change. The days of the hand held whip are so yesterday...and giving ourselves a hard time for not being perfect or 'falling off the wagon' so to speak has never worked for anyone. So, if you do have a slip up, accept it and move on. It's a natural part of the process.

Embrace the change - Really confirm the changes you are making for yourself. Enjoy how good your body feels when you make better food choices and are exercising regularly, and don't be afraid to flaunt it!

You might also like to read about our [Top 5 Wholefoods To Support Anxiety](#)

5 Wholefoods to Support Anxiety



Anxiety is complex, but there is so much evidence to show that the food we eat can have a significant effect on our state of mind. Here are 5 of my favourite wholefoods that can support a calm, relaxed and anxiety free mind and body.

Flaxseeds (Linseeds)

This tiny seed works to calm our mind in many ways. Firstly, it is the best plant source of Omega 3 fatty acids. This type of fat is strongly anti-inflammatory and helps to protect our highly valuable nervous system from stress. Studies show that there is an inflammatory cause behind many mood problems, including anxiety. Flaxseeds are also very high in fibre, which supports a healthy digestive tract and this is linked to a healthier mind. When our digestion is slow, we can reabsorb toxins in our colon and this can lead to increased toxic load in our body and poorer moods. This fibre also feeds our gut flora and studies show that this can help to balance our blood sugar levels as well as improve our moods due to the metabolites that the gut flora produce. One more interesting fact about the amazing flaxseeds is that it acts as a natural phytoestrogen, which means it can balance our natural Oestrogens in a safe and natural manner and we all know that our hormones can affect our mood! Flaxseed meal can be an easier way of digesting flaxseeds and can be made simply in your food processor at home.

Pumpkin seeds (pepitas)

The humble pumpkin seed (or pepita) is a powerhouse of nutrients that is especially important in mental well being. Pumpkin seeds are an excellent source of Zinc, which is crucial for the production in the brain of our anti-anxiety neurotransmitter GABA. When we have low Zinc levels in our brain our Glutamate levels go up leading to inflammation and we know this can cause Anxiety. Our Adrenal glands also need a lot of Zinc to help us to cope with stress and we need Zinc for energy. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of Tryptophan, the precursor to Serotonin, which is our happy brain neurotransmitter and can help us to feel more relaxed and less anxious.

Leafy greens

Another good reason to eat your greens! There are many varieties of leafy greens and perhaps the most nutrient dense are kale and spinach. One vital nutrient that they both contain is magnesium, an important mineral involved in over 300 different chemical reactions in our body. Magnesium relaxes our muscles, sending the signal to our brain that everything is okay and helps us to be calm. Magnesium also helps to make all three of our major brain chemicals that relate to mood being Dopamine, GABA and Serotonin.

Chia seeds

These seeds have been a super hot topic for a long while now and they are still up there with the best 'superfoods' as their nutritional qualities are outstanding. In relation to anxiety, it is the high protein, omega 3 content and their high fibre levels that are the major players. Chia seeds are a complete protein source and their role, once they have broken down to amino acids in the body, is to build other proteins like hormones, enzymes and once again our friends the happy neurotransmitters in our brain. Without enough protein, we cannot make sufficient amounts of these compounds and we can be more prone to anxiety. The fibre in chia feeds our gut flora and the Omega 3's, same as in flaxseeds, play the important role of reducing inflammation in the body, including the brain, reducing anxiety.

Basil

Holy sweet Basil, the common and luscious large leafed kind, has been used for centuries to calm and relax the mind. It is also called Tulsi and you may have seen it sold under this name as a tea. Basil is known to reduce feelings of anxiety, is used to help with depression and can improve memory and cognition. Studies show it can reduce cortisol, our stress hormone and can regulate our blood sugar levels. Simply use the whole leaves in a tea, dried is best or blend up into pesto and enjoy its full flavour.

Approaching anxiety gently and simply with whole foods is natural and sustainable way of supporting this common condition.

Are you getting a Good Nights Sleep?



Sleep problems are becoming more common these days with a 2016 survey revealing between 33% and 45% of Australian adults suffer from sleep conditions of different severities. If you are suffering from a serious sleep disorder, it's important you seek proper support from a medical health practitioner, however, in the meantime, here are a few lifestyle tips that can also help.

1. **Take daily time-out.** During the day cortisol, which is our get-up and go hormone, is highest in the morning and slowly decreases into the evening until we go to sleep. When we experience stress and anxiety during the day our cortisol levels can often be

too high at night to fall asleep or we wake only a few hours after getting to sleep. Taking the time during the day to relax, even if just for a few deep and mindful breathes here and there, will go a long way towards a better sleep.

2. **Reduce sugar intake.** The link between sugar and anxiety is now well-known and anxiety is one of the leading causes of sleep problems. Avoiding sugar or at least minimising its consumption will immediately improve anxiety levels. If you do consume sugar or processed foods (same effect as sugar), try and eat them with protein such as nuts and seeds as it will help to slow down its absorption and prevent your blood sugar from spiking.
3. **Eat more high magnesium foods.** This essential mineral is a powerful muscle relaxant, can help to reduce pain as well as to help your mind calm down, all beneficial for a great nights sleep. Foods that are good sources of magnesium include spinach, sesame seeds, quinoa, pumpkin seeds, Brazil nuts, almonds, black beans and avocado.
4. **Make a regular bedtime.** It is essential for a healthy circadian rhythm to have a regular bedtime, keeping within half an hour of a set time. This will allow the body to regulate your sleeping hours and your waking time. When our rhythm is regular, our body is more efficient at completing the activities it needs to do during the night. These include detoxing, repairing and growing muscle tissue, producing hormones and restoring energy levels in the brain.
5. **Avoid or minimise stimulants.** Caffeine in coffee, tea and chocolate can have a lasting effect as it promotes the release of cortisol keeping your levels too high for a deep nights sleep. Alcohol is a sedative, however it limits how deep you sleep and increases the likelihood of night wakings.
6. **Avoid blue light.** The type of light that comes from the sun and from our screens is known as blue light and interferes with our sleep hormone melatonin, keeping us awake for longer. When the sun goes down we naturally produce more melatonin, which increases our level of sleepiness. However, if we spend time in the evening, especially the hour before bed, our melatonin levels won't increase as much and we may have trouble getting to sleep. So its best to keep the hour before bed reserved for calming the mind and doing restful activities.
7. **Exercise regularly.** The primary way exercise works to improve sleep quality is by reducing conditions of hyper-arousal such as anxiety and stress as well as lowering depressive feelings. There is also a drop in body temperature a few hours after exercise that promotes sleep.

Above all, love yourself up in every way possible and you'll find a good nights sleep is a breeze as you know you absolutely deserve it.

What's All the Fuss About Self-Care



Self-Care is a term that has become very popular in the last ten years or so and particularly in the health industry with it's value being widely acknowledged. But what does it actually mean to self care? And how does it relate to diet and a wholefoods way of living?

Firstly, self-care simply means to bring the practice of **'care'** to ourselves. Said like that, it does sound very simple, and yet if we are honest, a lot of us find it easier to care for others than we do for ourselves. This is interesting, and perhaps something for another article, but if we were really looking to up the anti with our self-care, what would this look like in relation to our food choices and diet?

Self-care would mean choosing foods that *we know* nourish our body and taking the time to make sure our diet is a priority in our lives - as the foods we eat do and will always impact how we feel not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well.

Eating foods that are rich in nutrients and low in saturated fats and sugars are a great choice when it comes to self-care as they will always leave us feeling vital and energetic. Wholefoods of course fit into this category. They are indeed the purest foods we can choose for our bodies - straight from the ground or tree - as nature intended. They are also naturally low in sugar, and certainly free of refined sugars that are commonly found in processed and packaged foods. Foods that are lower in sugar are more supportive on our nervous and endocrine systems - two important body systems that contribute to our overall health and well-being.

Knowing that our food choices make up a valuable part of our self-care rituals gives us the opportunity to really take charge of our own self-care and health whilst enjoying the natural flavours and freshness of a diet rich in wholefoods.

Can We Help Our Digestion?



Eating healthy whole foods can go a long way in improving the effectiveness of our digestive tract but there are also many other factors involved in healthy digestion. Here are some of the ways you can support your own digestion system to be healthy and strong.

1. Eat your largest meal for breakfast or in middle of the day when your digestion is at its peak. Our metabolism is at its fastest at this time and its the best time to eat cold foods like salads. We naturally produce more digestive enzymes at these times and have more stomach acid, both of which are crucial to digestion. Try and eat lighter and smaller meals in the evening.

2. Drink plenty of water between meals. This hydrates your stomach acid preparing it for the next meal. Quite often when we are hungry or just want a snack it is because we are dehydrated and our blood pressure starts to drop. It is very beneficial to drink a glass of water 30 minutes before eating your meal but no sooner as it may dilute your stomach acid too much. This acid is essential to breaking down our food as well as the absorption of many nutrients including iron.

3. Practice gratitude. Studies show that practicing gratitude for the food you are about to eat, can significantly improve digestion. Taking a few minutes to take some slow breaths and to smell and pay close attention to the food in front of us and how it may support us, helps our body become ready to digest at its best. When we engage the senses it triggers certain actions in the body. More digestive enzymes are released, bile and stomach acid is released and our nervous system relaxes, allowing for greater breakdown and absorption of nutrients from our food.

4. Take a 10 minutes rest after eating. This short action can greatly improve digestion by slowing the body down and keeping the Rest and Digest (para-sympathetic) nervous system relaxed, which is crucial to efficient digestion. When we eat on the run or when thinking about a thousand other things, the other nervous system is activated, the 'Fight or Flight' (sympathetic) pathway, which is activated when we are busy, stressed or worried. So, remember to take a breath, focus your mind on your food and take a rest afterwards.

5. Take a short walk after eating. This has been shown by research to be very beneficial to our digestion. The main reason is that it gives our metabolism a little boost, which is very helpful for our digestive tract and is also relaxing for our nervous system. When walking,

try to do it slow and gentle and use this time to breathe deep and relax.

Looking after the health of our digestive system is vital for our overall health and well-being, so make sure you take the time to choose nourishing foods and give yourself the space to relax and enjoy them.

Why Activate Nuts & Seeds?



Nuts and seeds contain all of the nutrients and enzymes needed to produce a living plant, however they remain dormant until the conditions for germination are just right.

One of the components found in nuts and seeds is phytic acid; a compound that inhibits the enzyme phytase from beginning this germination process. In the nut or seed itself, this is a good thing, however phytic acid has a different effect on the human body.

Research has shown that phytic acid can cause all sorts of digestive issues from minor inflammation to bloating and or stomach aches. It also stops the absorption of vital minerals in the intestines such as magnesium, calcium, zinc, copper and iron (our favourites and the essentials). For this reason it is known in the scientific world as an anti-nutrient.

Consuming high levels of phytic acid can lead to digestive distress and mineral deficiencies.

So how do we still enjoy our nuts and seeds, and all the vital nutrients they have to offer? The answer is simple - we ACTIVATE.

Activating our nuts and seeds is a simple process that breaks down the phytic acid (as well as other enzyme inhibitors) stopping the mineral binding capacity and making our nuts and seeds more easily digested as well as giving us greater access to the minerals that make them up.

And so, it asks for a little of our time in the preparation process, but it is so worth it in the end.

Here's a simple recipe for activating your own nuts and seeds at home.

Its All in Our Bodies



When it comes to diet and nutrition, there is so much information out there telling us what to eat, when to eat, what time to eat, how to eat it etc etc. This can be very confusing for those of us who look to the experts to guide us in our dietary choices, especially when there are so many conflicting opinions about whats good and whats not so good for us to eat.

But what if we had the best nutritionist right here in our own body. What if the signs and symptoms we receive on a day to day, moment to moment basis were actually our bodies way of communicating with us and giving us realtime feedback on our food choices?

For example, have you ever eaten a huge meal loaded with carbs and afterwards you felt tired? Or bloated? Or irritable? Or edgy? OR perhaps you've had the opposite experience, of making yourself a meal and after finishing it, you felt light and energised?

From the slightest belly rumble or minor discomfort through to the more serious symptoms such as indigestion, heart burn, irritable bowel, bloating, tiredness, fatigue etc, all of these are signals from the body telling us something about the foods we are eating.

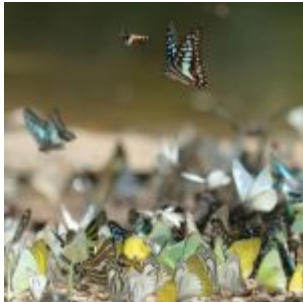
If we look at it in this way, it brings the ball back in our own court so to speak and it also means we have everything we need as a start point to know how to eat if we want to feel good and support ourselves. Of course there is always a time and place to get support and guidance from our professionals, especially if we have persisting symptoms that need addressing, however it brings a level of responsibility back to ourselves which can be very empowering.

Once we start to listen more to our own bodies as a guide for how to eat, we can start to play around with our diet and experiment with those foods that work for us and those that don't. Super simple really.

Our diet is a deeply personal relationship we can have with our own body, and one that is ever changing. It can also be something we enjoy as we learn from our bodies along the

way.

Anxious Much?



It seems anxiety is the buzz word these days (no pun intended) and something many of us can relate to experiencing at some point in our lives. Anxiety affects us on many levels, from a slight feeling of uneasiness, to the 'butterflies' in the stomach feeling and on to more extreme levels of anxiety often experienced as panic attacks, rapid breathing and a rise in heart rate. Yet, no matter what level of anxiety we experience, it all has a wearing down effect on our nervous and endocrine systems which eventually leads to physical exhaustion.

The effects of anxiety can go unnoticed for many years while the body is slowly worn down and this is where our diet can make a difference. Masking tiredness and exhaustion is easily done when we are consistently using stimulants such as caffeine and sugar to keep us moving through the day. However this can only go on for so long before other parts of the body will start to show symptoms that something is up. These symptoms can be anything from weight loss or weight gain, bowel and other digestive disturbances, sleep issues, insomnia and more.

One of the things we can do to support our bodies with anxiety is to be more aware of the foods we are consuming. For example, eating foods that are stimulating (or overstimulating) to the nervous system puts the body in a more heightened state and as a result can increase the likelihood of anxiety. Once overstimulated, it is very difficult to feel centered or calm and often we find ourselves racing through things or in a spin with our daily tasks. For this reason it makes sense that we avoid sugary and processed foods, as well as coffee and other caffeinated beverages such as black tea, cola and some energy drinks.

Each these substances increase nervous system activity which can further exacerbate anxiety. Even if we are not aware of it, the slightest bit of racing in our nervous system means our bodies are working overtime to keep up, which will always result in unnecessary tiredness or exhaustion.

So what are the types of foods that might support us to stay steady and calm and not go into overdrive?

Eating a wholefoods diet that consists of nuts, seeds, wholegrains and legumes, along with a variety of whole protein sources including eggs and lean meats, is a great start in supporting a more balanced and harmonious body that can handle those more challenging moments in life. The foods we choose to eat will always lay the foundation for which we will be able to respond to life's every day challenges. That foundation can be either solid and steady from choosing those foods that support us, or shaky and erratic, from choosing the foods that do not. Either way the choice is ours.

Learn in more detail about the relationship between sugar and anxiety here from Naturopath Jesabe Warner.

Wholefoods for a Healthy Gut



Following on from last weeks article Understanding Gut Health by Jesabe Warner, here are our top wholefoods for fostering a healthy gut.

Slippery Elm

The inner bark of the slippery elm tree is long known for its medicinal qualities and healing effect on the gut. Once slippery elm is ground into a powder and mixed with water, it becomes mucilaginous (gel-like) in texture which accounts for most of its medicinal properties. The gel has demulcent (soothing) actions on all mucous membranes in the body including the digestive tract. It also has an astringent effect, tightening the surfaces it comes into contact with and providing a barrier to bacterial infections as well as relieving diarrhoea. On top of this, slippery elm is rich in nutrients and can be used as food for infants, the elderly or patients with intestinal inflammation.

Due to the soothing nature of Slippery elm on the Gastrointestinal Tract, it is recommended as a super nutrient in the case of diarrhoea, constipation, haemorrhoids, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or for expelling tapeworms. (Let's hope the latter we never need visit!)

Slippery elm can be taken in water as a mucilaginous drink, added to smoothies, or sprinkled onto breakfast cereal.

Black Turtle Beans

The high fibre content of Black Turtle Beans helps to improve digestion by keeping the digestive tract clear of toxic build-up. The fibre acts much like a chimney sweep cleaning out a chimney, only cleaning out the intestines, including the inner walls. Cleaning and detoxifying in this way supports the gut flora colonies to remain balanced and also contributes to healthy bowel flow and motion.

This has an overall affect on digestion in preventing unwanted symptoms such as constipation, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and diarrhoea. Black beans have also been shown in studies to protect colon health and help prevent colon cancer due to their high antioxidant content.

Black Turtle Beans are perfect for making Mexican dishes such as Chilli Con Carne, Black Bean Salad, Re-fried Beans or just for making simple winter casseroles.

Pepitas

Pepitas, otherwise known as pumpkin seeds, are a super little food packed with valuable nutrients. Just a small amount can provide our bodies with a substantial amount of fibre, healthy fats and magnesium, all of which are good for digestive health. Pepitas are also very high in zinc. Recent studies have linked zinc deficiencies with altered gut bacteria, suggesting that the mineral plays an important role in maintaining healthy gut bacteria. Zinc is also necessary for producing strong stomach acid which is vital for breaking down food for nutrient absorption in the small intestine.

Pepitas are great to eat with just about anything. On their own, in a nut and seed mix, sprinkled on savoury or sweet dishes. You just can't go wrong.

Carob Powder

Carob powder is one of our favourite wholefoods in wintertime and also it's a great caffeine free replacement for coffee and chocolate. For digestion, carob is high in insoluble fibre, which supports the process of water binding in the digestive tract enhancing the overall health of the gut. Carob also contains tannin's which are known to increase the effectiveness of particular enzymes that help alkalise the body and regulate digestion. For this reason carob is also a good food to support the treatment of diarrhoea and other related digestive conditions through its ability to reduce acid production.

Carob powder can be consumed in beverages hot and cold, as in a hot carob (rather than hot chocolate), or in smoothies. It can also be used in baking cakes as you would use cocoa or cacao powder.

Rolled Oats

The digestive benefits of eating whole or rolled oats has been talked about time and time again. The reason for this is mostly due to the high fibre content. Oats are high in all 3 types of fibre; soluble, insoluble and resistant starch. Each of these contribute differently to intestinal health. Whilst soluble fibre softens stool and increases nutrient absorption, insoluble fibre is the type of fibre that bulks our stools - both of which are important for keeping the digestion flowing and our bowel movements regular. Resistant starch is a third

type of fibre found in oats and some other foods that acts like a pre-biotic, feeding the friendly bacteria in the gut which supports the overall gut flora colonies.

Oats can be consumed in many ways, either as a porridge or in muesli, or they can be used to bake breads, biscuits, muffins and other deserts.

LSA (Linseed, Sunflower & Almond Meal)

LSA is another of our favourite wholefoods in store for its flavour and versatility. You can add it to smoothies, sprinkle it on cereals or porridge, put it into baking... it's delicious even when added as a garnish to warm salads. In relation to the gut, LSA is high in fibre and packed full of nutrients. This combination means slower movement through the intestines and greater nutrient absorption. LSA offers a good amount of calcium, magnesium, Vitamin E and zinc, all of which are all important nutrients for digestive health.

LSA meal can be added to smoothies, sprinkled over cereal or used sparingly in baking.

Remember that Gut health is dependent on many factors, so make sure you take a holistic approach to caring for your digestive health, and use these wholefoods as a support and not a cure. Where there are persisting symptoms, you should always contact a health practitioner.

Understanding Gut Health



Our gut health is the starting point when it comes to improving our energy levels. The integrity of our gut lining, the strength of the beneficial bacteria (flora) population in our gut and of course what goes in our mouth all affects our gut health and how energetic we are.

Our gut lining needs to be strong, durable and full of healthy villi which are tiny finger-like projections coming out from the walls. The villi's job is to absorb nutrients and to protect the gut lining by producing mucous, but they can be damaged in those with food sensitivities such as gluten (in the case of coeliac disease), soy and dairy if those foods are consumed. Conditions such as Giardia, many auto-immune diseases, helicobacter pylori,

some anti-inflammatory medications and alcohol intake can also cause damage and shrinkage of the villi. Fortunately, the vigour of the villi will return once the cause of the damage has been addressed.

Consuming a wholefoods diet packed with nutrients can fast-track the recovery of the villi, including natural anti-inflammatories such as omega 3 fats and turmeric. The better we can absorb the nutrients in our food by having strong villi, the more energy we will have.

The beneficial bacteria in our gut are totally extraordinary and also play a significant role in the amount of energy we have. Our total gut flora weighs more than 1 kg, has more roles to play in the body than any other organ and contains 10 times more cells than our own human cells. It produces short-chain fatty acids (SCFA's) that can assist the liver in energy production and also helps to lower cholesterol. When we have a strong army of gut flora, our colon cells are well fed and can function at their highest potential. A healthy gut flora population will also improve our immune system, regulate moods and boost our metabolism, all leading to increased energy and vitality.

In order to support our beneficial gut flora we need to be consuming enough fibre. The flora relies on the fibre we eat to maintain their population and to produce the SCFA's that then provide the fuel for the cells in our gut wall. Eating a variety of vegetables, fruit and legumes will ensure you have the full range of fibre for the flora to feast on. Remember, any sudden changes to your dietary fibre intake affects your gut flora significantly, for example, if your body isn't used to legumes you may experience bloating and gas. So slowly does it when increasing fibre to ensure a smooth ride along with a gradual but delicious increase in your energy.

Jesabe Warner

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods

10 Things You Should Know About A Wholefoods Diet



Eating a diet rich in wholefoods offers so many benefits not only with our physical & mental health, but also the health of the environment we live in.

Here are ten reasons why eating wholefoods is the way to go....

1. **Wholefoods are our bodies natural choice** - the term wholefoods is simply another way of saying untouched or natural foods. Eating foods as nature intended means less stress on our bodies natural rhythms.

2. **Wholefoods ask us to be more aware of our diet** - Its true. Choosing a wholefoods diet means taking the time to consider the types of meals you are going to prepare for yourself and your family. This naturally calls for an element of self care in our day which supports our overall health and well-being.

3. **Wholefoods contain far more nutrients than packaged or processed foods** - A diet that is rich in nutrients means more energy and vitality in our day.

4. **Wholefoods are better for the environment** - with less packaging involved in buying wholefoods, particularly when buying from a green grocers or bulk food store, you are also supporting the environment by lessening the impact of landfill.

5. **Wholefoods means healthy digestion** - because wholefoods contain a lot of natural fibre, they help our digestive systems to run more smoothly from go to woah!

6. **Wholefoods taste great** - not only are wholefoods so nutritious, but they also offer a variety of delicious flavours and textures to play with in our cooking.

7. **Wholefoods have less toxins** - Most wholefoods are preservative free and naturally low in sugar which means less stress on the pancreas, liver and nervous system and more harmony for the body.

8. **Wholefoods support growing bodies** - Being more nutritious then processed and packaged foods, a wholefoods diet supports growing bodies by providing children and teenagers with the nutrients they need to get through this important stage of their lives.

9. **Wholefoods are a great investment** - a lot of people believe that buying wholefoods is more expensive then buying packaged foods. Finding a great bulk foods store allows you to choose the quantities you want which is more economical in the long term.

10. **Wholefoods are simple** - and you just can't beat simple, in anything.

To see some delicious wholefoods recipes visit our [Recipe Blog Here](#)

Our Top Ten Wholefoods to Keep you

Healthy this Winter



One of the best ways to keep healthy throughout the cooler months of winter is through our diet. Eating a wholefoods diet supports us year round, but is particularly beneficial in times when our bodies immune system may be compromised as it is when we are exposed to cooler temperatures for long periods of time.

Of course, we cannot say enough for keeping warm and this can also be done through the foods we choose to eat and how we are preparing them. Adding spices to our cooking is an easy way to bring more warmth to our foods, not to mention the delicious & varied flavours they add.

After careful consideration, here we share our top ten wholefoods to support immune health and keep you healthy throughout winter.

Almonds

Starting with almonds because we love them so much and for so many reasons. Not only are they so delicious but they are also one of the few nuts that are alkalising in the body due to their high calcium and magnesium content. An alkaline body is generally less likely to harbour illness when physical or environmental stresses are present. Almonds are also an excellent source of protein, potassium, iron, zinc and vitamin E, and a good source of antioxidant flavonoids.

Throughout winter you can toast your almonds with a range of different spices to add warmth and flavour. A combination of chilli, cumin and coriander is delicious and very warming for the body.

Black Turtle Beans

This humble little bean (more simply known as black beans) is a favourite in store and is particularly good for making Mexican style bean dishes such as Chilli Con Carne or a warming Black Bean Salad. Black Turtle Beans rank the highest on the antioxidant rich list for all beans due to their high anthocyanin content. Anthocyanins are antioxidant flavanoids found in darker coloured food such as berries and red grapes. They protect the cells by fighting against free radicals that enter the body through air or food.

Pepitas

This tasty seed has so many benefits it was inevitable that it make the grade. High in protein and fibre, and full of flavour, pepitas are great for heart health, brain health and general well-being. The high levels of iron & phosphorus support blood flow and circulation

whilst rich amounts of Zinc boost immune and thyroid support. Pepita's are also an excellent source of Vitamin E, which offers antioxidant defence as well.

We recommend you eat pepitas in a nut and seed trail mix, bake them into homemade bread, or toast to sprinkle onto salads or soups. They also go well as a substitute for nuts when making herb pesto.

Figs

One of our favourite dried fruits in store, dried Turkish Figs are a great natural source of the alkalising minerals calcium, potassium and magnesium and are also high in vitamin K, iron and fibre. Due to their high mucilage content, the fruit and leaves have been traditionally pulverized and gargled to heal and soothe sore throats. We do though recommend figs be consumed in moderation due to their high fructose (sugar) content.

Figs are delicious on their own or combined with your favourite nuts and seeds as a snack. They are great sliced and cooked into a warming winter style porridge with cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg spices. They are also a great addition when making homemade bliss balls.

Pine Nuts

A hidden gem, pine nuts are technically not a nut but an edible seed found in the cones of the pine tree. Pine nuts are a great addition to your winter repertoire being an excellent source of vitamins and minerals that support immunity and bone health as well as antioxidant support. They contain rich amounts of Vitamins B1, B3, E, K, plus our favourite minerals magnesium, phosphorus and copper. They are also a great source of protein, fibre and healthy monounsaturated fats.

We love sprinkling freshly toasted pine nuts on top of warm salads, quinoa or rice side dishes, casseroles, scrambled eggs, smashed avocado on toast, or roasted vegetables. They are also our traditional favourite to add to do it yourself homemade pesto which is always great to have on hand for an easy pasta dinner option.

Black Quinoa

Black quinoa is an excellent source of protein, fibre and complex carbohydrates. It offers a source of complete protein for the body, containing all the essential amino acids as well as B vitamins, folate, vitamin E, iron, magnesium and zinc. It's dark colour is due to its anthocyanin content which as mentioned above, is a supportive antioxidant to help keep the body a disease free environment.

Black quinoa is delicious cooked as a side dish to **curries** and casseroles throughout the cooler months. It also goes well in soups (you only need small quantities) or as the main component in salads.

Walnuts

One of our healthiest nuts, walnuts are a great source of the beneficial omega 3 fatty acids and the important antioxidant, vitamin E. They are also rich in the vitamins B3, B6 and folate, high in the minerals copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorous and zinc, as well as being a good source of protein, and fibre. We chose them in our top ten as they are a great all round nutritious nut to support our bodies throughout winter.

You can eat walnuts as part of a trail mix or use them in your cooking and baking. They are great in homemade breads and muffins, delicious crumbled over porridge, and of course they bring loads of flavour when toasted and added to warm salads.

Medjool Dates

No surprises that our Organic Medjool's made the top ten. Larger, softer and sweeter than regular dates, medjool dates taste almost caramel like with a creamy texture that has them melt in your mouth. They are often used as a natural sweetener in cooking and baking, and particularly in making raw food recipes, but they also have many properties that are supportive to our health. Medjool's are said to boost bone health, reduce triglyceride levels, prevent and relieve constipation, decrease cholesterol as well as being a natural energy booster that tastes great. Some of the nutritional benefits include being high in fibre, low in fat and an excellent source of the potassium, magnesium, calcium and B6.

Dates are delicious in baking or cooked in porridge throughout the winter months. Our Tip: being super sweet, a little goes a long way!

Moong Dahl

You can't beat a wholesome warming dahl in the winter time and the classic moong dahl (coming from the split mung bean), boasts a beautiful flavour and rich nutrition. It is a fantastic source of protein and dietary fibre, one of the best sources of natural folate and an excellent source of magnesium, calcium and zinc, fast making it a natural addition to our top ten.

Moong dahl is traditionally used to make **warm spiced dahl** to which there are many variations and styles. It is also a great addition to winter soups (used in small quantities).

Green Lentils

Last but absolutely not least we have chosen green lentils to complete our top ten. The lentil family often goes unnoticed due to their popularity, but don't underestimate this legume and the benefits it has to offer. Nutritionally they are an excellent source of iron, fibre and protein, also containing many beneficial vitamins and minerals including magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and copper.

Mostly we love green lentils for their versatility and their simplicity in preparation. Soak overnight or rinse before cooking into **simple soups**, curries or casseroles - our top 3 winter favourites!

Enjoy the winter in 2017, keep warm, and happy wholefooding!

If you liked this article you may also enjoy reading about **Wholefoods for Healthy Kids**

Affordable Wholefoods Raises the Bar on Sustainability



After our experience with Cyclone Debbie and the impact of the floods on the Lismore community, we have been reflecting on our own position with sustainability within the store. Personally we saw so much waste from the flood, nothing in the store could be salvaged in keeping with hygiene, health and safety regulations. So every tub, every container, every-thing went to the Waste & Recycling Centre (aka our local tip).

We have always supported and encouraged the use of recycled materials in both our Lismore and Coffs Harbour stores, keeping our own business as sustainable as possible without losing the quality and freshness we are known for. Being environmentally aware is important to us and a huge part of our business. As a result of this, where we can, we offer the best in the way of supplying our customers with paper bags for their produce or glass jars in multiple sizes. We also support customers bringing in their own clean jars for filling to save on paper and plastic waste.

Another recyclable product we sell that supports sustainable living are the well-known Eco-Silk bags. These can be used just as you would a regular plastic shopping bag from the supermarket, or to put larger quantities of dried goods in.

After our experience with the flood, it brought to our attention even more than ever how every little bit counts and so we have now expanded the options for our local shoppers by being the first in the Northern NSW region to introduce a new recyclable shopping pack that contains 5 bulk food drawstring bags, 3 fruit and vege bags and 1 large shopping bag all made from organic cotton that is GOTS certified (pictured above).

The pack comes to us from Dreamtime Mentors; an Indigenous Corporation that promotes a 'Zero Waste' lifestyle and makes available sustainable and ethical products and services for communities around Australia.

Please Note: Unfortunately at this time we cannot use porous fabric or paper packaging for items purchased & packed through our online store. This is due to quality and safety standards in relation to food that is being transported via post. At this time our choice to use heat sealed zip lock plastic bags is based on our commitment to providing you with a quality product that is fresh on arrival to your door. We encourage you re-use and recycle these zip lock bags where you can.

Read this short article on how a wholefoods diet can support the environment and sustainability.

The Bigger Picture: Why Eating Wholefoods is Better for your Body & the Planet



A wholefoods way of living supports us in so many ways, and in a time where we are witnessing much environmental and resource depletion it is certainly showing us there is a need to take more care with our food choices and our environment. By choosing wholefoods over processed foods we can all individually contribute to minimising the damage to our planet as well as strengthen our connection to our food and to our bodies.

When we buy wholefoods such as legumes, nuts, seeds and grains, we minimise the need for processing machinery, the use of unhealthy additives and preservatives and the mega tonnes of plastic packaging that is thrown out each week. They also work out more cost effective in the long run and provide us with nutrients in their whole form, which are much easier for our bodies to take in.

Wholefoods are usually available in bulk food outlets that offer paper packaging as opposed to plastic and where customers can bring in their own containers and jars. This practice once again reduces the impact on the environment and is also a cheaper way to buy nourishing whole food. It also means it is possible to buy only the amount we actually want and will use, reducing the risk of wastage.

Many nutrients in food have a natural synergy and are far more potent when consumed as whole foods rather than in nutritional supplements and in foods that are fortified with certain individual nutrients. The relationship between sodium and potassium is a great example. When in balance, they help each other to move in and out of the cells in our body but if we consume too much of either one it can disrupt this delicate equilibrium. There is

certainly a lot to say for staying with what nature intended!

With a diet packed full of wholefoods complete with their rich and diverse range of nutrients you are well on your way to reducing your risk of the most common lifestyle disease such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and Alzheimer's disease. Providing your children with wholefoods will reduce their risk of allergies, attention and mood disorders as well as giving them more energy and stronger bodies.

Another great outcome of eating a diet rich in wholefoods is enhanced body awareness and greater clarity of mind, meaning we can make better decisions for ourselves, for our kids, for our community and for our planet as a whole.

By embracing and appreciating a wholefoods way of living you are giving yourself, your family and the planet the best chance to be healthy, happy and full of life.

By Jesabe Warner

Naturopath Affordable Wholefoods

To find out where you can buy ethical and sustainable wholefoods visit the Fair Food Forager and download their app.

A Foolproof Recipe for Greater Vitality



Our gut health is the starting point when it comes to improving our energy levels. The integrity of our gut lining, the strength of the beneficial bacteria (flora) population in our gut and of course what goes in our mouth all affects our gut health and how energetic we are.

Our gut lining is made up of tiny finger-like projections called villi. Their job is to absorb nutrients and to protect the gut lining by producing mucous. In people with food sensitivities such as gluten, soy, or dairy, these villi can be easily damaged if those foods are consumed. Other stressors that can cause damage or shrinkage of the villi include giardia, helicobacter pylori, some anti-inflammatory medications, alcohol and auto-immune conditions.

Fortunately for us, the vigour of the villi will return once the cause of the damage has been addressed. Consuming a wholefoods diet rich in nutrients can fast-track the recovery of the villi, including natural anti-inflammatories such as omega 3 fats and turmeric. The better we can absorb the nutrients in our food by having strong villi, the more energy we will have.

The beneficial bacteria in our gut play an extraordinary role in our energy levels. It is estimated that these little bugs combined weigh more than 1 kg, and together consist of more cells than the rest of our bodies cells put together. The bacteria produces short-chain fatty acids (SCFA's) that assist the liver in energy production, help lower cholesterol and feed our colon cells. When we have a strong army of gut flora, our colon cells are well fed and can function at their highest potential. A healthy gut flora population will also improve our immune system, regulate moods and boost our metabolism, all leading to increased energy.

One of the areas in which we can support our beneficial gut flora is to be consuming enough fibre in our diet. The flora relies on fibre to maintain their population and to produce the SCFA's that then provide the fuel for the cells in our gut wall. Eating a variety of vegetables, fruit and legumes will ensure you have the full range of fibres for the flora to feast on. Remember, any sudden changes to your dietary fibre intake affects your gut flora significantly, for example, if your body isn't used to legumes you may experience bloating and gas after eating them. So slowly does it when increasing your fibre intake to ensure a smooth ride with a gradual but delicious increase in your energy levels.

Jesabe Warner

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods

If you enjoyed this article you may like to learn more about **how sugar works in your body?**

Health Benefits of Herbs & Spices



Not only do herbs and spices improve the taste of our food, they also provide a range of nutrients and health benefits. Some spices are known to boost metabolism, improve insulin sensitivity and improve digestion. Many herbs and spices also contain more disease-fighting antioxidants per gram than fruits and vegetables.

Here are some common herbs and spices, their health promoting benefits, and how to incorporate them into your diet:

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is well known for its ability to stabilize blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity, which can help people with Type 2 Diabetes. When sprinkled on high carbohydrate foods, cinnamon will slow the rate of stomach emptying, reducing the rise in blood sugar levels. Cinnamon has one of the highest antioxidant levels and has been shown to reduce inflammation and blood triglyceride levels. Cinnamon is an excellent source of manganese and fiber and a very good source of calcium. Manganese is important for healthy bones, formation of connective tissue and absorption of calcium, amongst other functions.

Sprinkle over oats, pancakes, homemade muesli bars or protein balls, roasted sweet potato and pumpkin, or add to smoothies. Cinnamon is also delicious as part of a chilli spice mix. Try simmering a cinnamon stick with plant-based milk and a dash of nutmeg (optional honey to taste), for a warming winter drink.

Cayenne Pepper

A little goes a long way with this hot spice! The active ingredient 'capsaicin' in cayenne boosts metabolism which increases your body's ability to burn fat. It also increases circulation, allowing more oxygen and nutrients delivery throughout the body. Just be careful if you have a sensitive stomach as too much can irritate the stomach lining. Cayenne Pepper is an excellent source of vitamin A, C and B6. Vitamin A is important for eyesight.

Use cayenne to flavor meat, poultry or spice up fish dishes. Delicious when combined with paprika and sea salt to chickpeas before roasting.

Turmeric

Turmeric has long been studied for its strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits. The active ingredient 'curcumin' has been found to improve the regulation of inflammation, oxidation, cell signaling, blood sugar levels, blood fat levels, and brain levels of the omega-3 fatty acid called DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), among its many benefits. Turmeric has also shown to enhance detoxification, reduce cancer risk, improve brain function as well as potential therapeutic benefits for some autoimmune conditions including Crohn's and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Warm up with a delicious turmeric golden latte. Add turmeric to roasted veggies, curries, meat and poultry, egg dishes, or in smoothies (try turmeric and ginger with banana,

pineapple or mango, a handful of spinach leaves and a cup of plant-based milk).

Ginger

Ginger can improve digestion and is particularly useful at easing nausea and stomach upset. Studies have shown it to be useful at reducing nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Ginger is an excellent *carminative* (relieves intestinal gas), as well as an *intestinal anti-spasmodic* (relaxes and soothes the intestinal tract). Ginger contains potent anti-inflammatory benefits. It can also help detoxification pathways by stimulating digestion, circulation and sweating. This may help cleanse the liver, colon and other organs and boost immune function.

Add ground ginger to your cup of tea, or water bottle with a little lemon. Ginger is also delicious in stir-fries, curries, slow cooked dishes, or over baked fish. Try out a healthy gingerbread cookie recipe.

Oregano

Oregano is an effective anti-bacterial, with studies showing the volatile oils in oregano inhibiting the growth of bacteria. Oregano contains many phytonutrients including potent antioxidants, and is a good source of fiber, manganese, iron and calcium, and excellent source of vitamin K. Vitamin K is important for blood clotting when needed as well as the maintenance of healthy bone density, reducing the risk of fractures and osteoporosis.

Oregano is commonly used in Mediterranean dishes including pasta, pizzas, to flavor meat and poultry. It is delicious when added to sautéed mushrooms and onions, omelets and frittatas. Add some oregano into your olive oil to infuse with the essence of oregano.

Coriander Seeds

Coriander seeds are high on the list of healing spices due to its exceptional phytonutrient properties. Phytonutrients have been scientifically researched and found to allow for optimal cellular function and communication. When our cells are communicating effectively, enzymatic and biochemical reactions take place, required for optimal functioning of our body. This all leads to healthier tissues and organ systems, detoxification, proper digestion and metabolism function, and a strong immune system. Research has found that coriander helps to control blood sugar, cholesterol and free radical production. It is also a very good source of vitamin K.

Add coriander seeds to soups and broths, slow cooked dishes, curries, risotto or poached fish. Add coriander seeds to your pepper grinder with pepper to add extra flavor to all dishes. Try a homemade falafel recipe with coriander seeds.

Fennel Seeds

Fennel seeds are an excellent source of a broad range of essential minerals including copper, potassium, calcium, zinc, iron, manganese selenium and magnesium. Zinc and selenium work together in acne healing and hormonal regulation. Fennel seeds have been found to have a wide range of medical purposes, including increasing milk production in lactating women. It is commonly used in herbal remedies particularly in Ayurveda. The oil in the seeds is found to be carminative, calming the nerves and promoting mental clarity. Fennel seeds have been found to reduce fluid retention, reduce asthma symptoms, help purify the blood and used in tea to relieve constipation, indigestion and bloating.

You will get more flavor from fennel seeds if you grind them just before cooking. Fennel seeds are used both in sweet or savoury dishes, is delicious in a spice blend, as a dry rub for meat and poultry, and sautéed with onions. You can add ground fennel to healthy oat cookies (perfect as a snack for breastfeeding mamas). Fennel is commonly used in tea blends.

Tris xx

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Simple Starter Recipes for Kids



Wholefoods are the foundation of a healthy diet and nourished body and are one of the best gifts we can give to our children. As we discussed in last weeks article, bringing our kids into the kitchen at an early age and teaching them about cooking with wholefoods is a great

way for them to learn about different nutritious foods and to help them feel more independent and involved in their food choices.

It's possible that kids who are involved in the cooking of meals within the home will also feel more connected to the food they eat and how it affects their body. They may also be more likely to eat a wider variety of non processed natural foods as opposed to the many packaged foods that fill our supermarkets today.

Cooking with your kids also provides a fantastic opportunity to pass down family traditions & recipes, as well as create new ones along the way. Reflecting on fond memories of our own experiences cooking with family members when we were young, can inspire us to do the same for our own kids.

For example, when I was young I remember sharing time with my grandmother in her kitchen. One of the things I recall her cooking often was Apple Muffins. She would always peel the apple, amazingly every time creating one long continuous strand, and I would be standing underneath with my mouth wide open catching and chewing the juicy fresh apple peel. She would always use produce from her garden and make use of everything she could, not much was wasted and she passed that cooking ethic onto myself and my brother.

There are so many simple recipes that can be fun for kids to get started with that requires just a little patience (and letting go of the sight of a messy kitchen to begin with) for parents and guardians. Here are a few of our favourites on the recipe blog to help you get started.

Simple Cinnamon Biscuits

Gluten Free Pancakes

Pizza Popcorn

Homemade Mexican Tortilla's

Brownies

Homemade Granola

Homemade Banana Ice-Cream

Sweet Potato Wedges w/ Homemade Dukkah

Simple Vegetable Curry

Healthy Banana Bread

Savoury Chickpea Pancakes

Sticky Caramel Popcorn

With each of these recipes they will need supervision and guidance at first and its well worth it seeing the smiles on their faces as they learn something new and see the end result.

Kids & Lunch Boxes

Encouraging kids to make and pack their own school lunch boxes offers them great independence and responsibility from a young age, and often they thrive with this. Older kids can cut fresh veggies such as lettuce, capsicum, tomato and cucumber to make a wrap with either chicken or tuna or whatever other filling they prefer, vegetarian or otherwise. Another useful skill for your kids that will save you time is showing your kids how to put leftover dinners into containers for their school lunches the next day. This helps everyone

with the after dinner pack down whilst also teaching kids to be careful with food storage as well as the importance of minimising food wastage in the household.

When it comes to smaller children packing lunch boxes or just starting out making their own snacks at home, you can begin with soft fruits such as watermelon, kiwi, strawberries or banana. All these can be cut with small hands using a butter knife into pieces that can be threaded onto a wooden skewer or simply put into a patty pan or container for a lunchbox snack. Older kids can thread dried fruits such as sultanas, dried apple, raisins or dates onto the skewers along with the fresh fruit. Cutting, slicing and threading are all great practices for developing kids fine motor skills, but must always be supervised in the early stages.

There are so many ways to get your kids active in the kitchen and I hope this article has set you off to a fun and fabulous start.

Jesabe Warner

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods

If you enjoyed this article you might also like to read **Wholefoods and Kids**

Wholefoods for Kids



In a world where allergies, anxiety and attention disorders are sky-rocketing in our kids, there is much to be said about eating a wholefoods diet and its role in the prevention and treatment of these conditions. It is also a great way to educate children, and bring more fun into eating for them as they explore the different textures, tastes and shapes of natural wholefoods.

Many kids in western countries who have grown up with highly processed and packaged foods are unable to name the most common vegetables, let alone different beans, grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Without this general knowledge, how can our children understand the important connection between what they eat and the health of their bodies?

Whole foods contain the full and diverse range of natural plant nutrients that our children need in order for their bodies to grow and function properly. Often kids (and adults) with

attention and mood disorders are especially susceptible to nutrient deficiencies and significant improvement can be seen when switching to a whole foods diet. This means avoiding or reducing processed foods with their high salt, sugar and preservative content, minimising fruit juices, which cause a spike in blood sugar, insulin and adrenalin (followed by a crash in energy) and increasing whole foods such as beans, seeds, nuts, fruit and vegetables.

Allergies in kids are caused by a number of different factors but it is essentially an inflammatory reaction by the immune system. When their young and sensitive bodies have a lot to process ie additives and preservatives in foods, toxins in our water, chemicals in soaps and shampoos and pesticides on fruit and vegetables it can overwhelm their system, leading to allergies as well as anxiety, depression, headaches and digestion problems.

Including more wholefoods into your child's diet can be easy. Making patties for the kids using cooked whole grains with a little flour instead of just flour is one way of introducing more nutrition into your child's diet. Try mashing cooked cannellini beans, baby lima beans or moong dahl in with cooked potato for added nutrients and protein.

Homemade Baked Beans are fun to make with kids and don't come with the added sugar, salt and preservatives that canned ones do. Making pancakes are another great way to get kids involved in cooking at home. Although flour is used here you can use wholemeal or buckwheat flours and then add some desiccated coconut to the mix, which is rich in fibre, high in protein and a great source of good fats. You can also add seasonal fruit or berries to the mix for natural sweetness, poppy and sunflower seeds for minerals and chia seeds for extra protein and energy that will fill the kids up for longer.

A wholefoods diet for our kids will lead to them experiencing strong bodies, better moods, more energy and a healthy weight. All the things we want for our children and then some.

Have a great week in the kitchen!

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Self-Care Tips for a Healthy Mind & Body



Caring for your body is a way of showing how much love you have for yourself. It's you telling you that you're important, that you matter and that you deserve to be cared for. There is no limit to how self-care can support you to feel good about yourself and it's amazing how simple it can be. It also has a positive affect on your physical health, and your body will feel so much better for it.

Here are some simple self-care activities for you to make a regular part of your day.

Dance ~ Put on your favourite tunes and move your body, and let it do its thing. Music and movement can really help to lift the mood, to feel energised and to release any tension that we're holding on to in our body.

Stretch your body ~ This helps to move fresh blood and nutrients into the muscles and joints, keeping them healthy and flexible. It can also bring our focus into our body and away from our mind that is often full up with thoughts.

Drink herbal tea ~ Try and skip the coffee and take time out with a cup of nourishing herbal tea. Just the act of sitting and sipping slowly will help to calm the mind, freeing up energy for your body. It will also reduce the acid load caused by the coffee and will save the minerals magnesium, potassium and calcium from being eliminated.

Take time out to meditate ~ Practicing meditation to connect with our body is very nurturing. It can shift our focus away from any racy thoughts of the past or future, and allow us to feel more centered and relaxed. A calm body and mind will experience more settled digestion and sleep patterns, and give us the energy needed to move through our days.

Get some sun ~ With so much sunshine in Australia, it is strange to know that Vitamin D deficiency is very common here. Our bodies need a little exposure to the sun each day as we can't make Vitamin D on our own. Just 15 minutes in the summer during 10am and 3pm and a bit more in the cooler months is usually enough to meet our requirements.

Try a new and healthy ingredient each week ~ Our bodies are designed to eat a broad range of foods covering hundreds of different nutrients. Choose a vegetable, fruit, seed or other plant food each week to add to your recipes that you haven't tried for awhile or that you haven't tried at all. Eating a wide variety of foods will help keep your body nourished and can keep your creative spirit alive in the kitchen.

Give your skin a treat ~ Splurge on a good quality moisturiser and spend time going over your body, finding the spots that need more attention and perhaps are in need of a gentle rub.

Have a good laugh ~ Perhaps the most important one of all is having a good belly laugh each day. Talk with a friend you can have fun with, watch some comedy or read something funny. Your body and mind will relax and thank you for it.

With a little self-care each day you'll feel more connected to yourself, more relaxed and better able to cope with whatever comes your way.

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods.

If you enjoyed this article, you might also like Stress, Anxiety and the Wholefoods Diet

Diabetes - The 21st Century Health Epidemic and What To Do



Diabetes Type 2 is an epidemic health condition with almost 300 people in Australia alone newly diagnosed each day. That's one person every five minutes and more than 100 000 in just one year. (1) On a global level an estimated 415 million adults suffer from the illness with 12 percent of the global health expenditure spent on diabetes (a whopping USD \$673 billion dollars). (2)

The path to Diabetes Type 2 begins with insulin resistance, which progresses gradually over a long period of time. Insulin resistance is the resistance of our cell receptors to use insulin to take up glucose out of the blood and into the cells to be used for energy. This causes high levels of glucose in the blood and the pancreas responds by producing more insulin, but of course over time this becomes futile as the cell receptors become ineffective at using insulin. The cells in the pancreas that produce insulin eventually wear out and around 50-70% will stop producing insulin altogether.

Having all this glucose in the blood with nowhere to go is very damaging to our blood vessels, leading to heart problems, decreased vision and foot ulcers. Many symptoms result from the glucose not being taken up by the cells for energy. These include weight gain, headaches, mood swings, dizziness, increased appetite and feeling tired and lethargic.

With this being said, the fortunate news is that both Diabetes Type 2 and its precursor condition, insulin resistance, can be treated and even prevented with proper diet and lifestyle guidance. Here are some simple tips that can help prevent this condition as well as manage symptoms for those who have already been diagnosed.

- **Regular exercise.** Most of us unfortunately do not get enough. When we move our bodies, insulin works better, we lose excess fat tissue, our blood pressure normalises

and our metabolism increases.

- **Eating a diet rich in wholefoods.** Whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds contain protein, fibre and complex carbohydrates designed by nature to provide a slow release of nutrients, including the glucose in the carbohydrates. This in turn places less pressure on the pancreas to pump out a whole lot of insulin at once.
- **Avoid or minimise caffeine.** Drinking coffee, black tea and caffeinated beverages causes a spike in blood glucose, putting a massive strain on the pancreas and therefore on insulin production. Avoiding caffeine or getting support to eliminate it from your diet is a wise choice.
- **Relax more.** Cortisol is a hormone that increases with stress and general busy-ness and triggers the release of glucose for energy, causing blood sugar to spike. Learning how to better handle the pressures of life by giving ourselves time out (especially time to really nurture ourselves), is a vital part of being able to keep our bodies relaxed and tension free.
- **Eat regular meals.** When we eat a lot in one meal, then skip the next, our pancreas once again has to secrete a lot of insulin at one time. Taking care to eat smaller portions that are spread evenly during the day in 3 or 4 meals will encourage a balanced mind and body and a healthier pancreas
- **Include fenugreek and cinnamon into your diet.** These two spices are known to help manage balanced blood sugar levels by working to improve glucose tolerance. Fenugreek can be added to soups, casseroles and curries and **cinnamon** can be simply sprinkled on your breakfast cereal or stirred in to your herbal tea.

Following these guidelines is a great step towards a much healthier and balanced you, mind and body.

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(1) Diabetes Australia

<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/diabetes-in-australia>

(2) Diabetes Australia

<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/diabetes-globally>

Beans, Beans, Good for Your ?



Over many thousands of years, the humble bean has made its way across the globe, becoming a central ingredient in the cuisine of many cultures. Perhaps the most well known bean dishes are those coming out of Mexico and other parts of South America such as Chilli Con Carne, Frijoles Refritos (refried beans) and their common companion 'Nachos'. However, many other countries use beans in delicious signature dishes such as the rustic bean dishes of Southern Italy, the robust and hearty dishes enjoyed across the African continent, the sweet bean pastes reminiscent of Asia, and who's not to dismiss the English folk for bringing us the all time favourite, baked beans.

Aside from the enjoyable flavours and great culinary variety beans can bring to our diet, they also have many health benefits. Being rich in protein and amino acids and in particular the amino acid Lysine, beans are known to help in the prevention of cold sores.

White beans contain very high levels of phosphatidylserine, an amino acid compound that is known for its role in cognitive function. This tiny molecule has been found to produce significant benefits on mental stress, memory, and muscle recovery from exercise. Some of the more notable white beans include Great Northern, Cannellini and Navy beans. The latter got their name after being a staple in the Navy during the 1900's (probably due to its high protein and nutrient content).

Beans are one of the most versatile ingredients to have in your kitchen. Pinto, Cannellini and Navy beans are great in casserole dishes and are perfect for making baked beans. Black Turtle and Black-eyed beans are excellent for soups and stews and Chickpeas are perfect for making dips, falafel and veggie patties. Red Kidney and Adzuki beans, you can do almost any thing with including desserts. Then of course there is the popular Mung bean that is perfect for sprouting to eat in salads or for making vegetarian curries and dahls.

All beans are best soaked overnight and rinsed before cooking, which makes them much

easier to digest. Caution needs to be taken with kidney beans as they contain a toxin when they are raw and need to be boiled for 30 minutes before eating.

Beans are the perfect year round food as you can add every type of warming spice to them in the winter and eat them in cooling salads in the summer.

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If you enjoyed this article, you might also like to read about how to '**Get the most out of Your Grains & Legumes**'.

10 Juicy Foods to Keep you Hydrated this Summer!



Image: Watermelons and Grapefruits are two of our favourite hydrating foods

We often associate being hydrated with drinking plenty of water; however the foods we choose to eat can either dry us out or they can provide us with nourishing hydration. By choosing to eat raw and juicy foods more often you will be increasing your fluid intake as well as giving yourself a super nutrient boost. Here are our top 10 juicy foods to keep you hydrated this summer:

1. **Watermelons** are super juicy and fantastic on their own but are also great in salads with nuts and seeds. You can simply blend watermelons with lemon juice and mint to make a refreshing drink or blend and pour into homemade icy pole melts. Watermelons are 92% water and contain potassium, calcium, magnesium and sodium to get you hydrated fast.

2. **Capsicums** are also 92% water and are an ideal raw ingredient to add to salads or to enjoy just on their own. Red capsicums have the highest levels of nutrients and have a sweet almost fruity flavour. Orange capsicums have the next most amounts of nutrients followed by yellow and then green with the least. This is because green capsicums are harvested before they have ripened. The nutrients capsicums contain are B1, B6, folic acid, vitamin C and beta-carotene.
3. **Grapefruits** are perhaps one of the most under-rated of the fruits as they play a key role in appetite control, healthy insulin levels and in the liver detox system. They are also rich in vitamin C, lycopene (an anti-oxidant) and choline. Grapefruits also help to promote healthy blood fats and especially the ruby red fruits, are delightfully sweet.
4. **Pineapples** are not only juicy and super flavoursome, they contain bromelain. This enzyme is used by our body to digest the proteins that are in our diet and it is also a powerful anti-inflammatory, playing a key role in wound healing and calming down arthritis.
5. Another fruit with high water content is the humble **pear**. They are very deliciously sweet but the high levels of beneficial dietary fibre will help to keep your blood sugar balanced as well as your bowels regular.
6. The flesh of the **cucumber** is mainly water but it also contains vitamin C and caffeic acid. It is this molecule that helps with puffy eyes and can help cool and soothe the skin, especially irritations and sunburn.
7. **Lettuce** contains an incredible 94% water with high levels of vitamin A. Large lettuce leaves make the perfect wrap alternative for this hotter weather.
8. **Carrots** are around 87% water and have the highest levels of beta-carotene than any other food. This nutrient is converted to vitamin A in the body, which is a powerful anti-oxidant that plays a critical role in neurological function and maintaining healthy vision.
9. **Tomatoes** are vitamin packed rosy gems that are high in water and ideal for making summer salsas and sauces to drizzle over salads to keep you cool. They are a good source of vitamin A and vitamin C.

10. **Zucchini's** are packed full of water as well as the nutrients potassium, folate, vitamins A and C. Try slicing them thinly along with the juicy radish and mixing with salad greens, cooked beans, olive oil, lemon juice and your homemade salsa.

Water plays a crucial role in the health and integrity of each cell in our body and with as little as 2% dehydration our well-being starts to decline, including our brain function. These top 10 juicy treasures, along with adequate fresh and clean water intake, is a must this summer to keep your cells happy, your digestion functioning well and your energy levels on fire.

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Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods.

Understanding Emotional Eating



Image: Cup Cake Comfort

We probably all know what its like to comfort eat. Our food choices and eating habits often change when we are stressed, sad, dissatisfied, lonely or bored. The type of hunger influenced by our emotions is different from an actual physical hunger and stems from a belief that certain foods will give us comfort and something to distract us from our thoughts. This can happen without us being consciously aware of it.

When we experience different types of stress, our body isn't able to differentiate between them, it will respond the same way in the face of an argument as it does to any physical stress. Cortisol is released and blood glucose rises but it is quickly stored mostly in fat tissue, if it is not used up through exercise. This sudden drop in glucose will have your limbs reaching for simple carbohydrates and sugars to restore balance. If this happens on a regular basis, you will experience increased appetite with cravings for sugar and other simple carbohydrates as well as a steady weight gain around the waistline.

There are ways to help combat this cycle by being aware of when you have been triggered and want to eat for comfort. Eating in this way only serves to bury the feelings we are

trying to avoid, and so, the next time something happens and you notice that you are grabbing for chocolate or other sweet foods, see if you can try some of the following tips to support you instead.

- Try and sit with whatever it is that is triggering you. You may want to write it down, talk to someone or ponder on what you are being challenged by.
- Do some gentle breathing until you feel more settled and the thoughts have slowed down.
- Change your movements, have a little stretch and try not to give too much focus to the emotions.
- Take yourself out into nature where you have the time to reflect and resettle yourself if you need to.
- Take a walk to help balance your blood glucose levels and relax your body and mind.

Always give yourself the space to observe what is going on for you behind the scenes and if you find yourself still going for the food, make sure you don't give yourself a hard time. After all, there will be plenty more opportunities ahead.

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Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods

Boost & Nourish Your Skin this Summer



Our skin is designed to protect our precious insides from potentially damaging environmental stressors, it gives us a whole range of different sensations and it has the role of being the largest detox organ we have in our body. We need healthy skin to help us regulate our temperature and to provide us with sweat and lymph glands, essential for efficient elimination of toxins, known as detoxification.

One of the ways in which we can nourish our skin is through our diet and there are a number of foods out there that can support with this. Here are some of my favourites.

- Berries contain high amounts of vitamin C, which is important in collagen formation.

Collagen gives skin its elasticity and strength and is the most abundant protein in the body. Broccoli, parsley and kiwi fruits are also very high in vitamin C.

- Olive oil is a rich source of vitamin E, used by our body to prevent damage to collagen and to the healthy fats in our skin cells. Avocado's, sunflower seeds and almonds are also good sources of Vitamin E.
- Brazil nuts are high in Zinc, an essential mineral needed by the skin to maintain proper structure, to improve wound healing and to help protect against UV radiation from the sun. Pumpkin and sunflower seeds also contain good levels of Zinc.
- Linseeds contain high levels of essential omega 3 fats, shown to improve flexibility and reduce inflammation in the skin. Chia seeds are also an excellent source of omega 3's.
- Dandelion root is a well-known caffeine free coffee alternative and has a stimulating effect on the liver. This means when you drink this tea your liver will produce more bile to help you digest your food; improve the detox system in your liver, placing less pressure on your skin to detox.
- Macadamia oil contains high levels of palmitoleic and oleic acid making it the perfect choice for mature or dry skin. It also contains Phytosterols which are protective to the skin working much like cortisone in helping to reduce itchiness and inflammation. For this reason it is the perfect choice as a daily nourishment to keep our skin looking and feeling vibrant and healthy.

A good dose of vitamin D and salt water is also a fun way to nourish your skin this summer.

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Here are some of our favourite Skin Nourishing Recipes

Macadamia, Turmeric & Passionfruit Smoothie

Vietnamese Noodle Salad

Colourful Quinoa Salad

Swiss Chard Quiche

A Wholesome Christmas with Affordable Wholefoods



As 2016 winds up it is a great time to reflect upon the happenings of the year and to take a moment to stop and appreciate. In this final article for 2016, we would like to share our thoughts on eating well to feel well over the holidays, along with some of our favourite wholesome recipe alternatives to the often (overly) rich dishes that are traditionally shared throughout the festive season.

Christmas time is the perfect opportunity to explore new recipes and have fun with ingredients you haven't used before. We don't always need to repeat the traditions of old and can certainly save the Christmas hangover by keeping our cooking simple and light yet still full of flavour. Impress your friends and loved ones with new and interesting breakfast recipes, creative summer dinners, time-saving slow cooked meals and healthy refreshing drinks.

Using your slow-cooker more often this summer will reduce the time your oven is on and heating up the kitchen. This time saving gem can be used not only for casseroles and slow cooked soups or curries; you can cook almost anything from frittata or homemade granola, to dips, stuffed capsicums and healthy desserts. Cooking this way reduces the need for oil and has the added bonus of being easy to clean.

Healthy time saving and kid friendly summer breakfast ideas are handy to have ready for this time of the year. An all-time favourite, especially with the kids, is **Home-made Baked Beans**, perfect on toast with avocado. One that takes more time but is well worth the effort is our popular **Peanut Butter Granola** and **Teff Pancakes**, always a winner. If you want something different for breakfast and want to get your day off to an extra healthy start try a savoury option, for example a simple **Raw Asian Salad** with poached eggs or our ever popular **Gluten Free Chickpea Pancakes**.

Keep Christmas snacking healthy with **Gluten Free Quinoa & Rice crackers**, they are surprisingly easy to make, keep well in the fridge and are a treat alongside our **Macadamia and Semi-Dried Tomato pesto**.

Here are some of our favourite main meal recipes of the year we thought would be perfect to share with friends over the summer. These recipes are great when you need to serve for more than 4 people: **Swiss Chard Quiche**, **Roast Garlic**, **Sage & Pumpkin Pie** or the **Sweet Potato & Quinoa Slice**. Each of these meals taste great warm or cold and can be enjoyed on their own or with a salad. We recommend the **Healthy Yoghurt Slaw** or **Colourful Quinoa** as two of our favourite salads for this summer. And don't forget the

delicious **Quinoa Tabbouleh** that is always a crowd pleaser.

There is often pressure to drink a glass of bubbly, wine or beer amidst the festive season celebrations however if you're not too keen to do this there are other alternatives. Coconut water is a super hydrating drink that can be mixed with nearly anything. Try a combination of lime and pomegranate juice or simply mix with ice and some fresh mint leaves. If you are looking for a little fizz, try sparkling water with fresh lemon or lime juice. You'll definitely feel better for it the next day.

So, from all of us in the Affordable Wholefoods Family, a big thank you for reading our blog this year and for trying our ever growing collection of delicious recipes. We hope you have found much inspiration in what we have shared with you and wish you all the very best for a healthy and wholesome Christmas & New Year.

Stay tuned, as Affordable Wholefoods has only just begun.

See you in the new year,

Jesabe Warner

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