



# Wellbeing Insights

*Living a Better, More Vibrant Life*



## Beating the Winter Blues

If you find your mood dropping along with the temperature, your energy being zapped as autumn's vibrant colors fade or your temper shortening along with the hours of daylight, you are not alone. The winter blues affect one in four Americans to some degree. Not surprisingly, the further from the equator you live, the more likely you are to feel gloomy in the winter. Only about one percent of Floridians report winter-specific discomfort/depression while nearly half report it in the northernmost parts of the country.

The winter blues occur on a spectrum, ranging from mild generalized doldrums to the clinical condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The distinction is important. Anyone with the blues or SAD may experience fatigue, lethargy, mood downturn, apathy, irritability, overeating, weight gain and carbohydrate cravings. However, a person with SAD experiences a pattern of clinical depression, occurring only in the winter months, and their symptoms are far more severe. SAD is linked specifically to the biochemical

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imbalances linked to lack of sunlight. If you believe you may have SAD, see a physician as there are very effective treatments for this condition.

Here are some fun ways to help you battle the blues and boost your wintertime wellbeing:

**Embrace the season.** Many of the happiest communities on the planet are cold for a majority of the year. (Think Canada, Norway, Finland.) If they can embrace the cold, so can you! Our experience relies on our mindset, so set your mind to appreciate the winter. Instead of resisting it, embrace every opportunity to ice skate, sled, ski, etc. And who says the holidays have to mark the end of indoor décor? White twinkle lights and extra greenery in the house can help keep the cozy vibe alive inside all winter.

**Create excitement.** Be proactive in planning things to look forward to in the winter. Host an indoor theme party, tend to that book and/or movie list you typically wouldn't have time for, schedule a nice hot bath, or try a new comfort-food recipe such as soup or stew. Get creative and take charge of scheduling something to look forward to at least a couple of times a week.

**Maintain warm-weather habits.** While embracing the season can go a long way, so can some determination to maintain warm-weather habits. It may be dark when you are leaving work, but don't go home and call it a night at

6pm; stay active in the evening as you would with more hours of daylight. Brave the outdoors, especially when it's sunny out (even if only for a short time). Lastly, continue to wear bright colors. This may sound silly, but wearing only dark and neutral colors, as many of us tend to do more in the winter, can dampen your mood more than you might think.

**Light it up!** One of the most common treatments for SAD is bright-light therapy. This therapy utilizes a special fluorescent lamp, often called a sunbox, that mimics the sun's rays. This type of lamp can also be an effective remedy for general winter blues. Many people report that a sunbox is well worth the investment. Less exposure to the sun can also lead to Vitamin D deficiency, which further contributes to fatigue, depression and feelings of muscle weakness. Consider a Vitamin D supplement of at least 600 IUs and up to 5,000 IUs daily.\*

**Get ambitious.** Finding ambition in the winter is tough work, no doubt about it. However, trying something new, acting on a resolution or personal goal, or digging in to a new project around the house can be a great way to avoid hibernation and find a sense of meaning and accomplishment in the winter.

*\*Consult with a doctor before supplementing and to determine the dosage that is right for you.*

## On the Menu

# Turkey Time

Turkey has become more than just a holiday tradition with a rise in popularity of this lean meat as a substitute for red meat products. In 1970, 50 percent of Americans' turkey consumption happened during the holidays compared to only 26 percent today. Now you can find ground turkey, turkey sausage, turkey bacon ... the list goes on and on! This has resulted in a 116 percent increase in consumption since the 1970s. In fact, the average American today eats about 18 pounds of turkey per year. This popular protein boasts some great health benefits along with its pleasant and versatile flavor.

**Relaxation:** Feeling sleepy after holiday dinners? That might be primarily due to the sheer volume of food, but turkey can take partial credit with its healthy dose of tryptophan. This amino acid is a precursor to certain neurotransmitters that work to generate serotonin and melatonin in the body, producing a relaxing and mood-stabilizing effect.

**Protein:** Just one four-ounce serving of this bird provides 32 grams; that's 65 percent of your recommended daily intake of protein!

**Boosts brain power and metabolism:** Turkey is an excellent source of B vitamins. B12 helps preserve brain function and protect against cognitive

decline, while vitamins B3 and B6 are great for a metabolism boost. One serving of turkey has 36 percent of the daily recommended intake of B3 and 27 percent of B6.

**Prevents cancer:** One key benefit of turkey is that it contains trace minerals thought to aid in cancer prevention. It contains selenium, which is essential for the healthy function of the thyroid and immune system. Selenium also contributes to your antioxidant defense system, helping to eliminate free radicals in the body.



Nutrition Info	
Per serving	
Calories	303
Carbohydrates	40g
Fiber	2.1 g
Protein	22g
Sodium	159mg

### Keep It Fresh

To avoid pesticides and hormones, buy fresh and organic. Fresh turkey (not frozen or previously frozen) is less likely to have additives such as MSG, sodium and others. Buying organic ensures that the turkey will be higher in nutrients due to the diet they ate. In addition, buying pasture-raised or certified humane turkey will guarantee the highest quality and cruelty-free meat.

Turkey is very sensitive to heat, so if you are marinating, make sure to keep in the refrigerator. Refrigerated turkey will keep for about one to two days. If it's already cooked, it will keep for about four days.

## Turkey, Dill & Rice Soup

### Ingredients:

- 5 c low-sodium chicken broth
- 1-1/2 c shredded turkey
- 1-1/2 c shredded or thinly sliced carrots
- 1 c cooked rice
- 1/2 c chopped onion
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh dill

### Directions:

Bring the chicken broth to a boil in a large saucepan. Add the carrots and onion and simmer until tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Stir in turkey, rice and dill. Simmer until heated through, about 2 minutes. Serves 4.



## Mindful Minute

The holiday season fills many of us with a desire to give. In some ways, this urgency is imposed by cultural expectations for buying and giving gifts. But it is also a beautiful manifestation of the spirit of the season. It can be easy to fixate on the pressure to spend more money on tangible gifts for those we know. We encourage you this month to embrace the opportunity to **give your time**, as well. The feeling you get when you help another person with no expectation of the favor being returned cannot be described in words, and that feeling has a lasting impression.

- Stop for those in need: change a flat tire, hold a door open, pick up dropped groceries
- Volunteer to walk dogs at an animal shelter
- Volunteer at a local soup kitchen
- Get involved with your faith community's outreach program

The list is endless. No matter how you choose to give your time, you will receive your own gifts that money cannot buy – the feeling of connectedness and the satisfaction of helping others.

# Fireplace Reflections

## Is Wood Burning Friend or Foe?

There are few things more comforting and wholesome than wood burning in the fireplace on a cold night. Enjoying the warmth, the aroma and the dancing flames can melt away stress and summon fond memories. It's hard to accept that there might be a downside to this simple life pleasure. After all, wood is a natural material, and its use as a fuel and heat source extends back hundreds of thousands of years. However, the result of wood burning is quite clear; it's bad for you, your children, your neighbors and the environment.

Our beloved wood fires are problematic primarily due to the tiny airborne particles they produce, which are harmful to our health and the environment. Wood smoke contains compounds that are known carcinogens, including carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, sulfur dioxide, benzene and more. These particles are less than one micron in size, making them small enough to get lodged deep into our lungs for months or, worse yet, diffuse directly into our blood stream, causing serious structural damage. Sitting fireside is not unlike puffing on a cigarette or inhaling vehicle exhaust. Massive inhalation of wood smoke causes more than one million deaths annually in parts of the world where they rely on wood burning for heat and cooking.

Children who live in homes with active fireplaces or woodstoves or in areas where this is common experience higher incidence of asthma, cough, bronchitis and compromised lung function. Among adults, wood burning is associated with more frequent hospital admissions for respiratory illness, increased mortality from heart attacks and greater susceptibility to colds, flus and other respiratory infections.

In the environment, wood smoke contributes to smog, acid rain and global warming. For all of these reasons, many developed countries are enacting laws to regulate when and how long wood burning is allowed in the home. Washington, Colorado, New Mexico and California are among the early adopters of such regulations in the U.S.

There are now many in-home alternatives to burning wood, the most popular and safe being gas and electric fireplaces:

- Electric fireplace inserts are the cheaper option and do not generate pollutants. They are a fairly efficient heat source, require little maintenance and produce very little waste. However, they do not produce an authentic flame and cannot be used in the event of an electrical outage.

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***“YOU’LL NEVER CHANGE YOUR LIFE UNTIL YOU CHANGE SOMETHING YOU DO DAILY. THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS IS FOUND IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE.”***  
***– JOHN C. MAXWELL***

# Goal-Setting 101

Changing habits is a very complicated business. Scientists have created theory after theory on what leads to success and failure in changing our wellbeing behaviors. One aspect most can agree on is the importance of setting goals that will truly serve you. The framework for creating these is called SMART goals.

The first step is to figure out what you really want. Do not set a goal based on what you think you should do, what you think you lack or what others say you should change. Instead, ask yourself, what do I want? What will I be thankful I did one year from today? What do I want more of in my life? This first step is critical, so take your time. Once you know what your long-term goal is, write it down in your own words.

From here you can begin to work toward your long-term vision by crafting a series of SMART goals. Work on each letter, writing down your responses as you go. Remember, you may need to work through several separate short-term SMART goals to reach your long-term goal. It's important to have your goals written out, in SMART fashion, to achieve what you want.

**S** **Specific.** What am I going to do? A goal should clearly and concisely describe exactly what you wish to accomplish. For example, "I will wait until I'm hungry to eat" is much more specific than "I will lose weight." To make your goal specific, ask what do I want to accomplish? Where will it take place?

**M** **Measurable.** How will I know that I have accomplished my goal? In order to determine if you have succeeded, you need to be able to measure the outcome. For example, "I will walk regularly" is not measurable; whereas "I will wear my fitness device and get 8,000 steps per day" is. Ask yourself, how will I know when I have accomplished my goal?

**A** **Achievable.** Can I achieve this goal and will it result in the change I desire? A good goal will challenge you while still being achievable. Unachievable goals are demotivating, so ask yourself if the goal is realistically too easy or too hard to achieve. For example, "I will give up caffeine" may be out of reach for the regular coffee or soda drinker, while "I will replace one cup of coffee with decaf tea each day" may be more realistic.

**R** **Relevant.** Will reaching this goal get me closer to what I ultimately desire? Once you have determined your long-term objective, each goal you set should result in movement toward achieving it. A relevant goal answers the question 'why?' Why is this goal important? Will accomplishing this goal provide movement toward my overall purpose?

**T** **Timely.** What is my target date for reaching this goal? A timely goal has a clear conclusion date. Goals should be grounded in a practical timeframe to ensure accountability and some sense of urgency. Consider how long you think you need to perform the goal to internalize it as a habit. A timely goal answers the question 'when?' How long will it take me to complete this goal? When will I determine success or failure?

# App in a Snap

**Name:** Donate a Photo

**Price:** Free

**Focus:** Community Wellbeing



In an effort to give back and stay connected with consumers, Johnson & Johnson has launched the app, Donate a Photo. It allows you to share or donate a photo, and in return Johnson & Johnson donates \$1 to the charity of your choosing. You can donate one photo per day and select any of their featured charity campaigns to contribute to.

Making memories, capturing special moments with pictures and the spirit of giving are all marked qualities of the holiday season. Donate a Photo allows you to tap into all of this at once. When you donate a photo and share it, it allows others to see how you made a difference and raises awareness so that they, too, can become involved in helping a cause. This is a great way to give back this holiday season and, best of all, it only costs you a photo.

*Joe Oberoi, Wellbeing Coordinator, donates a photo a day and has found the experience very gratifying.*

# Year-End Tax Reduction Tips

The end of the year is the perfect time to review your overall financial picture and an even better time to get in those last minute tax deductions.

**1. Max out your workplace retirement contributions.**

While Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) are eligible to receive contributions up until April 15 of the following year, deferral contributions (or ROTH contributions) must be made before the end of the calendar year. The limit for 2016 is \$18,000 or \$24,000 if you are over 50 years old.

**2. Contribute to your favorite charitable organizations.**

Charitable contributions are tax deductible if you are someone who normally files an itemized tax return (Schedule A attachment). These contributions are the life blood of the organizations you support and also have tax benefits for the donor. Make sure you get those processed before December 31 or you will have to wait until next year to deduct them.

**3. Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) should be maxed out, as well.**

If you currently utilize a high deductible health benefits plan, you are probably eligible to have an HSA. These accounts allow you to defer up to \$3,350 (single) or \$6,750 (family). These can accumulate investment earnings and be used 100 percent tax free to purchase health-related services.



**4. Have kids? Utilize a 529 College Savings Plan.**

A 529 allows parents to save for their children's college education and has tax benefits. Most states recognize 529 contributions as a deduction from taxable income. At the federal level, the investment returns that these accounts earn are tax free if the proceeds are used exclusively for college expenses.

The contribution deadline for many deductions expires on December 31, 2016, so make sure you take advantage of these items before it's too late.

## Fireplace Reflections

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- Gas fireplace inserts are typically more expensive than electric inserts and still emit a small amount of pollution. They are an efficient heat source and produce a real flame. However, they require a considerable amount of planning and labor to install and come with some risks if not properly maintained, including overheating of the unit and gas leaks into the home due to poor sealing.

There are other alternatives, as well. If you desire a fire in your home on cold evenings, it would be wise to speak to an expert (or at least do your research) to find the alternative that best suits your needs, budget and existing fireplace structure.

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