



## Wellness Corner Connection



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### 'Tis the Season...To Be Stressed?

Not necessarily. For many, the holidays are that time of the year when you feel even more stressed than you usually do. Shopping, limited finances, gift demands, family interactions, loneliness and several other factors all go into making this time of year unique. For some, this stress can cause them to turn to food to cope. Add to this the actual physical demands that the holidays place on the heart (increased rate of heart attacks) and the stress of this time of year is clearly not something to take lightly. But it doesn't have to be that way. Here are some simple, yet often ignored, ways to help decrease your holiday stress. See what might work for you.

#### Simple Holiday Quiz:

1.) True or False: Eating with family and friends causes you to eat more.

2.) Start with this appetizer before a big holiday meal to consume fewer calories overall:

- A. Soup
- B. Salad
- C. A glass of beer
- D. Anything on a tiny cracker.

3.) Which is the healthiest cup of holiday cheer?

- A. Mulled wine
- B. Champagne
- C. Eggnog

Answer Key on page 3.

#### True Meaning of the Holiday

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." (Helen Keller)

IT IS NOT HAPPY PEOPLE WHO ARE THANKFUL. IT IS THANKFUL PEOPLE WHO ARE HAPPY.

What are you thankful for?

**Exercise:** Remember that mental stress can be relieved through physical exercise. But we hear so much about what we should do: how many minutes per day, how many times per week, etc. Yet so many of us find an excuse to avoid doing something because it's not fun or "I don't have time". Find something that YOU enjoy doing and will stick with. What do you enjoy that requires movement? A brisk walk in the park, taking a fun exercise class with friends, chopping wood, playing catch with your grandkids, walking your dog? Physical exercise is anything that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness. It strengthens your muscles, especially your heart and helps to manage your weight. It also helps to keep your immune system elevated to help ward off colds and flu. Best of all...it helps to reduce stress!

**Eat healthfully:** ...At least most of the time. Proper nutrition promotes health, well-being and rejuvenation. It gives you the nourishment you need for energy, for a strong immune system and can even improve cognitive function. Ultimately, eating healthy enhances your resilience to stress.

**Enjoy natural sunlight:** Winter is tough on those of us who need sunlight. It can be depressing being stuck inside. But if you can plan a brisk walk during your day, it can be a mood enhancer. No time? Then stand in front of a window and let the warm rays fall upon your face while you take deep breaths in and out.

**Set some ground rules:** Knowing that this is a time of rich and tempting foods, set ground rules about eating such as only eat while seated at the table, no food after 8pm, no second helpings, no "saving up calories" for that one meal. Know the difference between real hunger and stress eating! And don't feel pressured by Aunt Minnie to have more...politely decline, praising her cooking and would love just to enjoy the conversations.

**Be good to yourself:** Have a list of motivational sayings that inspire and strengthen your resolve. Use affirmations daily to help you feel good about yourself and your mission to stay healthy and enjoy the holidays with minimal stress! Show a little self compassion! You got this!

**Relax:** Give yourself at least 5-10 minutes each day for peace and quiet, a time to be reflective, meditate, or simply unwind. If you have small children, ask someone to watch them while you take a short break. Or simply escaping to a quiet room for a few deep breaths could re-energize and empower you. You deserve it!

**Music:** Listen to music that you love. If the holiday music gets monotonous, take a break and listen to something that energizes you. Why not put on a set of headphones while shopping especially if you've heard one too many "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire."

**Don't deprive yourself:** Enjoying the foods you love is important because if you deprive yourself of them, it could lead to binge eating. The key is planning to eat a small portion of the desired food, eat it slowly and savor every bite.

Resources: Psychology Today and WebMD

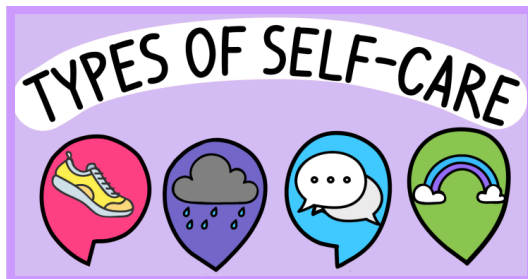


## Give Yourself the Gift of Self-Care This Holiday

A very important component to stress management is self-care. In my opinion, self-care IS stress management. Think about it...hitting the gym a few times a week won't sustain stress reduction if all you're fueling with is junk or processed foods. Managing stress starts with giving your body and mind the attention it needs to stay healthy, focused and strong!

Where do you start? According to an article in *PsychoCentral*, there are three golden rules:

1. Stick to the basics (good nutrition, regular exercise, sufficient sleep, hydration)
2. It needs to be actively planned rather than "letting it just happen". It's a choice only you can make.
3. Be aware of what you currently do, why you do it and how it feels. Now determine what it is that needs to change to help you become the best version of yourself.
4. **BONUS:** This one is my add on. Don't wait until New Year's Resolution Time rolls around. Chances are it will only last a month. Do it now and stick with it for a lifetime!

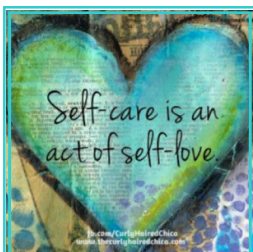


### SOCIAL SELF-CARE

Our relationships with others play a vital role in our overall well-being. Making time for friends and cultivating relationships could be a challenge; however, socialization is such an important component to stress management and resiliency it's worth devoting time in your schedule for this. Ask yourself: Are you getting enough face-to-face time with your friends? And what are you doing to nurture your relationships with friends and family? Take the time to think about this. If you need more interaction, make the time!

### SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

This does not mean religion. It's simply a connection to your true self and purpose in life. It's about nurturing your spirit however you can to develop a deeper sense of meaning, understanding, and link to the universe or higher power (whatever that is for you). Whether it's through meditation, attending religious services or praying, spiritual self-care impacts your entire being. Take time just to be! Sit quietly, reflect on what is important to you, connect with your purpose!



### PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

There is a direct connection between your body and your mind. So when you take care of your body through regular exercise, fueling it with healthy food choices, and getting adequate sleep, you also think more clearly and feel better overall! Be sure to keep up with annual wellness visits with your doctor, take necessary medications, and practice focusing on the positive not the negative in your life.



### EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

How are your coping skills when it comes to dealing with uncomfortable emotions such as anger, anxiety, and sadness? Emotional self-care can include activities that help you acknowledge and express your feelings in a healthy and safe way on a regular basis. It's important to talk to someone if you are struggling with your emotions. Find activities that help you feel recharged and alive! Don't let things build up inside.



### MENTAL SELF-CARE

Your thoughts will greatly influence your psychological well-being as well as your overall health. Mental self-care includes things that keep your mind sharp like puzzles or learning something new. Maybe reading (or listening) to a book or watching an inspiring movie (or TedTalks, etc.) will fill you with new ways of viewing your life and motivate you to thrive rather than just survive! Ask yourself: Are you making enough time for activities that stimulate your mind? And are you being proactive and engaging in activities that keep you mentally healthy?



### MAKE A PLAN

Everyone's self-care plan will look a little different. We're all unique as are the areas needing improvement. Where do you need to focus? Do you need more mental stimulation? Do you need to focus more on your physical health? Or do you need to get out with friends more and have some fun? Identify one area you would like to start with. What do you want to happen? Set up some small goals and behavior changes that will help you get there. And along with self-care comes self-compassion. Be kind to yourself as you incorporate changes. It won't be easy or quick but it will definitely be worth it!

<https://www.verywellmind.com/>



Do you take care of yourself? Most people would say yes. But what if you were asked "How?"

What is self-care? Activities we do deliberately in order to address our mental, emotional and physical well-being. What isn't self-care? It is not something we force ourselves to do, or something we don't enjoy.

Self-care is something that refuels us. It's the key to living a balanced life. It's the key to managing stress!

## What Does a Day of Fruit & Veggies Look Like?

We all know we should be eating more fruits and veggies—but many of us fall short on the daily recommended amount. For most adults that's 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 to 3 cups of vegetables (it's recommended that men get a little more veggies). Only 14 percent of adults are getting the recommended amount of vegetables and only 18 percent get enough fruit. That's really low, especially when you think about how good they are for you. Produce is loaded with fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. A typical response I have gotten is that there is "there is no way I can eat that many in a day". You would be surprised at how quickly and easily you can meet this healthy goal. Here are a few ways you can get the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables (2 cups of fruit, 2 1/2 cups of vegetables). I am a very visual person so I found this to be very helpful! I hope you find it to be the same.



- 1 small apple (2.5" diameter)
- ½ cup dried fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots)
- 1 cup broccoli, cooked
- 2 cups raw leafy greens + ½ cup cherry tomatoes



- 1 cup diced watermelon
- 1 large peach
- 1 cup baby carrots (about 12 baby carrots)
- 1 cup black beans
- ½ cup shredded cabbage



- 1 cup pineapple
- 1 medium pear
- 1 cup cucumber
- 1 cup red peppers
- 1 large stalk of celery



- 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- 1 cup grapes
- 1 cup spaghetti squash
- 1 small raw whole tomato
- 2 cups raw kale



- 8 large strawberries
- 1 cup diced plums (about 2 large plums)
- 1 cup green beans
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1/2 cup diced potato



- 1 medium (4" diameter) grapefruit
- 1 large banana
- 1 large baked sweet potato
- 1 cup Brussels sprouts
- 1 small green pepper



- 1 cup diced cantaloupe
- 1 cup blueberries
- 2 cups salad greens
- 1 cup chopped cucumber
- ½ small ear corn

So what do you think? Doable? And think of all the combinations you can make. They look beautiful right? Just think how great they are for your overall health!! Bon Appetite!

### Here are a few things to keep in mind as you celebrate the holidays:

1. Do not skip meals in order to "save room" for your holiday dinner. Your metabolism will slow down; you will be ravenous and will eat way more than you should and probably of the wrong stuff too.
2. Eat what you want but control your portions. Try to fill your plate with more fruits and veggies to start. Survey the entire buffet line before filling up your plate and pick 2 or 3 things you must have.
3. Don't stand or sit around the food table while you chat. You may mindlessly pick at the food even though you are not hungry.
4. Downsize your plate. Put your fork down between each bite. Chew slowly and taste/savor your food.
5. Don't forget to keep exercise as part of your routine! It's a great stress reliever and will help burn off some of those extra calories!
6. If you are determined to indulge, make sure to drink a glass of water between every adult beverage.

Many folks go into the holidays thinking "all bets are off" after all, this is the holiday and you are going to indulge, right? Well you can enjoy your holiday favorites and still keep on track to overall health and weight management. Don't rely on those New Year Resolutions...they typically don't work. Think lifetime! And enjoy!



**Answer #1:** TRUE. A study by Pennsylvania State University [found](#) that when people ate among friends or family, they consumed about 50 percent more than if they were alone or among strangers. One theory? Drinking and watching others indulge lowers your resolve, while conversation prolongs the meal and distracts us from being aware of how much we're eating. **Tip:** Be mindful, eat slowly, put your fork down often.

**Answer #2:** A. Soup. A study conducted by Baylor College of Medicine in Houston found that people who consumed a bowl of hot soup before meals ate less, lost more weight, and kept it off longer...provided you don't choose cream-based soups all the time!

**Answer #3:** B. Choose champagne for a holiday toast that'll go a little easier on your health than the others. Eggnog is loaded with cream, fat, and calories -- and that's before it's spiked.



## Fuel Yourself Against Colds

The best way to prevent and fight off colds is to keep your level of stress low and under control. But there are also foods that you can eat which will strengthen your immune system so you can fight off colds quicker if you should be faced with symptoms! Several nutrients are essential for a healthy immune system. They include iron, zinc and vitamin C.

If you want to build up your immune system to protect you from colds or at least fight hard for you if you should get one, make sure you incorporate many of the following foods which are fortified with vitamins that are perfect in doing just that.



**Blueberries:** these tiny blue wonder “bombs” have the highest levels of disease-fighting antioxidants of all commonly consumed fruit. They are loaded with flavonoids that act like an antihistamine and anti-inflammatory, and may actually protect against heart disease and cancer to boot!! If you can’t find fresh, go for frozen.

**Garlic:** Adding more than just flavor, this pungent clove contains a sulfuric compound with powerful antioxidants.



**Broccoli:** Loaded with vitamin C, broccoli plays a huge role in a healthy immune response. One cup contains more vitamin C than an orange! PLUS, it’s rich in calcium and packed with fiber!

**Salmon:** Rich in omega-3 fat, salmon not only helps to reduce the risk of heart disease but it encourages the production and movement of lymphocyte cells, which help to boost immune response. It’s also rich in vitamin D, which can play a big role in healthy immune function.



**Sweet Potatoes:** This starchy root vegetable is loaded with beta-carotene. Our bodies convert this into vitamin A which is an essential nutrient for maintaining a strong immune system, plus hair and skin health! Vitamin A keeps the mucous membranes, that line the throat and nose, healthy and functioning properly.

**Yogurt:** Yogurt contains live and active cultures that replenish our immune system with healthy bacteria. One cup can provide nearly 20% of the adult daily requirement for zinc. Be sure to read the labels as many brands are **extremely** high in sugar!



**Also...**



**Get adequate sleep**



**Drink plenty of water**

# MUSHROOM BOK CHOY SOUP

The 3 main ingredients in this soup are Shiitake Mushrooms, Portobello Mushrooms, and fresh Chinese Bok Choy – readily available in most supermarkets.

## Shiitakes

Shiitake Mushrooms are an edible mushroom native to East Asia. Because of their health benefits, they have been mentioned in books for thousands of years and are considered to be *medicinal mushrooms* in traditional herbal medicine.

They are packed with B vitamins and have the power to fight cancer cells, cardiovascular disease and infections. Plus, they also have antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal properties, help to control blood sugar, and reduce inflammation within the body.

## Portobello

These mushrooms have quickly risen to be the primary “*meat replacer*” in my home. Not only do they have a meat-like taste and texture, but they are also a good source of plant-based protein. Low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber, Portobello mushrooms are an excellent source of copper, which your body needs to produce red blood cells and carry oxygen through your body.

And, a single Portobello contains more potassium than a banana – 630 mg per serving – which is great for helping to control blood pressure.



## Bok Choy

*First of all, here's a fun fact: The name “bok choy” originated from the Chinese word for “soup spoon” because of the shape of its leaves.*

Cultivated in China for centuries, bok choy is a deep, green leafy vegetable that resembles Romaine lettuce on top and celery on the bottom, and is closely related to cabbage. Not only is it tasty to eat, it has also played a huge role in traditional Chinese Medicine due to its many health benefits.

Fresh Bok Choy provides an *insanely high* level of vitamin A and C per serving. A one-cup serving provides 140 percent of your RDA of vitamin A and over 75 percent of vitamin C—and as we now know...both are immune building, cold-fighting components! Then, of course, there are the antioxidants, an impressive number of phytonutrients, and an abundance of minerals like iron, calcium, manganese and folate....

This simple little cabbage can benefit almost every system in the body. Put them all together with a little vegetable-based broth and you have a super-healthy soup, that also happens to taste amazing.

## INGREDIENTS



- 1 medium onion, diced (*about 1 cup*)
- 1/2 lb shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 lb Portobello mushrooms, destemmed & sliced
- 2 medium bok choy, cleaned and chopped
- 4 cups low sodium vegetable broth
- 2 Tbs low sodium soy sauce
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tbs white miso (*optional but recommended*)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Dice the onion and add it to a large soup pan over med-low heat. You can add a tablespoon of water or veg broth to prevent sticking.
2. While the onion is cooking, clean and destem the mushrooms and slice them into thin pieces. Add them to the pan and continue to simmer over med-low heat.
3. Add 2 tablespoons of low sodium soy sauce, occasionally stirring
4. Cut 1/2" to 1" off the end of each Bok Choy plant and rinse them thoroughly. Then slice the leaves into bite-sized pieces and add to the soup pan.
5. Add 4 cups (1 qt carton) low sodium vegetable broth and increase heat to high.
6. Once soup begins to boil, reduce heat to low and cover.
7. Simmer soup for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally
8. Season with salt, pepper, and 1 tablespoon of white miso before serving. Stir well to ensure the miso dissolves into the soup.
9. Garnish with toasted sesame seeds and chopped green onion if desired.



Author: Brand New Vegan

⌚ Prep Time: 15 min ⌚ Cook Time: 15 min

⌚ Total Time: 30 minutes ■ Category: Soup

🍳 Method: Stovetop

🇻🇨 Cuisine: Asian, Vegan

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**Wishing everyone a healthy and safe holiday season!!!**

