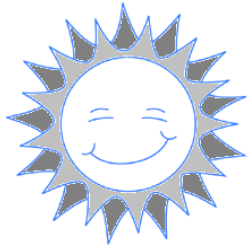




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- Recipe: Fabulous Tuna Noodle Casserole



Are You SAD about the Winter Blues?

Every winter about 2-4% of Canadians suffer from *Seasonal Affective Disorder*, or *SAD*. There are many different theories as to the exact cause of the disorder, but generally researchers believe it is greatly influenced by the decrease of daylight during the winter months. This decrease in exposure to sunlight affects the our hormone levels, namely a decrease in the amount of melatonin production and increase in cortisol production. These hormones affect our sleep, mood, personality, appetite and energy level.

People in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres suffer from SAD; however, close to the Equator cases are very rare since there are more hours of sunlight are throughout the entire year.

Some people are more susceptible to SAD than others due to their sleep patterns. The changing sleep cycles of students and shift workers leaves these individuals more vulnerable to SAD. Cortisol and melatonin are

the hormones affected by both a disrupted sleep cycle and SAD.

What are the Symptoms?

- o Sleep problems
- o Lethargy
- o Overeating
- o Depression (absent in mild SAD)
- o Social problems
- o Anxiety (absent in mild SAD)
- o Loss of libido
- o Mood changes
- o Craving carbohydrates and sweets

How to Brighten Your Day

Being out in the natural sunlight for at least 10 min with some exposed skin is the easiest way to avoid SAD. This helps to stimulate the production of vitamin D, as well as regulate the hormone levels in our bodies. However, with such cold temperatures it is often difficult to get, or stay outside other than running to and from a car or building.

Another option is using bright light therapy, which requires a light box that simulates natural light. Sitting in front of the light box for even 10 minutes, while eating your breakfast, can be enough to stimulate hormone balance. There is little risk of adverse side effects if these light boxes are used properly and according to the manufacturer's directions.

Bright light therapy boxes are available at many pharmacies in Hamilton.

Increase your fish intake

Another way to balance the hormones in you body and boost your vitamin D levels, is to increase your fish intake. Not all fish or fish oils contain vitamin D, however. Cod liver oil is thought to be one of the best sources.

Most fish are a good source of Omega 3 fatty acids, which are also beneficial for nourishing the brain, boosting memory, and decreasing the incidence of depression. The following fish contain the highest and are considered the best Omega 3 sources: Sardines, Mackerel, Albacore, Salmon and Herring (aka: SMASH).

Which fish are safe?

When choosing fish, the key is to avoid big, old fatty fish due to toxin accumulation. Smaller and leaner fish are considered "safer". The following are also considered "safer" fish.

- Walleye
- Pike
- Perch
- Pan Fish
- Flounder
- Sole
- Anchovies

NB: Remember to avoid farmed fish, labeled "fresh" at grocery stores. Try to buy *wild fish* when possible. This will reduce your intake of hormones and toxins found in farmed fish.

Tuna Noodle Casserole

This is a traditional family favourite, with a few modifications.

- 3 cups brown rice elbows, uncooked
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- ½ onion, chopped
- 1 can wild albacore tuna, drained
- 1 can Amy's organic cream of mushroom soup
- ½ can milk or unsweetened soy milk
- 1 cup frozen organic peas
- ½ cup grated cheese of choice

Cook pasta according to package directions, until *al dente*, then drain. Sauté celery and onion in olive oil until clear, add frozen peas and cover until thawed. Mix pasta, sautéed veggies, tuna, and soup in a large casserole dish. Add milk only if needed for liquid. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 350°F for 30 mins, or until heated through. Broil lightly until cheese bubbles.



Alternate Therapies for SAD

There are additional therapies other than sunlight and vitamin D for treating SAD. For example, regular exercise is a powerful and natural treatment. Although it may be difficult to motivate yourself to exercise on these cold winter days, once started you will be keen on continuing. Talk to your naturopathic doctor about a safe exercise regime. Some examples include weight training, brisk walking, jogging, cycling, cross-country skiing, swimming, dancing, and racquet sports.

Remember to get adequate sleep and that every hour before midnight is more restorative than the hours after. Having a regular sleep schedule helps to regulate your circadian rhythm and your mood. If you have trouble sleeping, make sure your room is dark, and avoid eating at least 2 hours before you go to bed. If you wake up with the need to urinate, stop drinking fluids/water a couple of hours before your bedtime.

Soup for More than the Soul

With the cold temperatures of winter now upon us, a healthy hot bowl of soup is a great way to stay warm and satisfied throughout the day. Below are a variety of organic soups that will keep you healthy and warm.

Amy's Kitchen: Organic Cream of Mushroom

- Kosher, Soy Free, Corn Free
- 140 Cal and 9 g of fat per serving

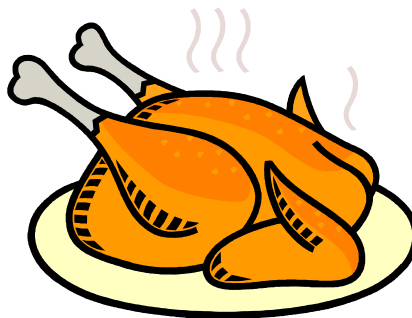
Amy's Kitchen: Organic Vegetable Barley Soup

- Dairy/Lactose/Corn/Soy Free
- Vegan, Kosher
- Low in fat and cholesterol
- Also available in low sodium

Rhodiola rosea (Roseroot)

Rhodiola has a long history of use worldwide. It is used for its adaptogenic effects and as a brain tonic. As an adaptogen, it helps to balance levels of hormones and neurotransmitters that are associated with stress by assisting the body to adapt to and resist the physical, environmental and chemical stresses experienced.

Studies on *Rhodiola* dating back to the 1960's have shown beneficial effects such as increased mental performance, improved short term memory and concentration. *Rhodiola* is best used in capsule form as a standardized extract.



5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP)

5-HTP is a metabolite of the amino acid tryptophan, a precursor to the neurotransmitter serotonin and the neurohormone melatonin. It is used for its effect of supporting mood balance, anxiety and sleep disorders. It promotes the release of feel good endorphins, much like exercise. 5-HTP has been compared to several pharmaceutical anti-depressants in clinical trials for use in treating depression; it was shown to have fewer and milder side effects.

Extracts of 5-HTP are derived from *Griffonia simplicifolia* seeds. 5-HTP has superior effects to tryptophan because of its ability to cross the blood-brain-barrier. It is best used in capsule form.

Newsflash

New to the office, two Registered Massage Therapists, Sylvie Hebert, RMT and Corey Henderson, RMT.

Sylvie has studied craniosacral therapy, visceral manipulation and somatoemotional release. She is also a qualified Reiki practitioner and currently studying Osteopathy.

Corey has experience working with lymph edema, sports injuries, sprains and strains, pregnancy, MVAs, MS, cancer, repetitive strain injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome and more.

Holiday Hours

Office will be closed from **Friday December 21st – Tuesday January 1st inclusive.**

We will still be checking messages daily, so call if you have an emergency.

Avoid Stimulants

Following a healthy lifestyle is important for the treatment of SAD. This includes cutting out cigarettes, alcohol and caffeine. These stimulants increase your adrenal gland output (cortisol), which in turn decreases the amount of tryptophan that reaches your brain. As you approach the New Year, consider New Year's resolutions that would cut out, or at least reduce these stimulants.

Naturopathic Perspectives

Dr. Caralei Peters, ND

Dr. Laura Grant, ND

Sylvie Hebert, RMT

Corey Henderson, RMT

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