**4 Nutrition & Wellness Tips to Beat the Winter Blues!**

The Winter Scaries! We all get them- even the most vivacious of souls can fall victim to the gray-day-grumpies and blistery-blues, and with midterms looming just around the corner, the stress is enough to push anyone to their lethargic limits! But, before you succumb to hiding under the covers or ordering a month supply of pizza-delivery to your bed, here are a few natural ways to combat the winter blues and boost your energy to make those daunting exams seem a little less so.

**1. You Are What You Eat!**

You wouldn’t use an Android cord to charge your IPhone would you? So why try to recharge your body with food that’s not compatible with its natural design? Everything we eat directly affects the systematic functions of our body, including our energy levels and how we react to stress! The (SAD) Standard American Diet pumps us full of highly-processed, sugary, and fattening foods that our body doesn’t recognize as fuel; leaving us feeling devoid of energy, bloated and stressed out! This winter, ditch Papa John’s and instead choose Mother Nature! Check out these stress- fighting, energy-boosting super foods:

* Whole Oranges (not processed juice with added sugar) - Vitamin C increases immune strength and lowers stress hormones.
* Raw Veggies- High in nutrition and mechanically releases clenched jaw and tension.
* Berries- (blue, red, black- can’t go wrong!)- Full of Vitamin C, B6 and B12 which fight off fatigue and promote clarity.
* Spinach or Leafy Greens- High in magnesium and iron which combats headaches and fatigue.
* Whole Grains- Such as oatmeal or whole grain bread- slow-burning, which reduces spikes in blood sugar, but also triggers the feel good chemical in the brain called serotonin.
* Omega 3- Healthy Fats, Salmon, Tuna, Nuts- Your brain is 60% fat and needs healthy fats to regenerate!

**2. Work It Out By Working-out!**

There’s nothing like breaking a sweat to break the stress! Exercise not only boost serotonin levels in the brain, but also triggers the release of chemicals called endorphins that reduce your perception of pain and stress! So grab a friend and hit the Wissahickon trails because working-out in cold weather burns extra fat as your body works harder to maintain your core temperature!

**3. Dream For A’s!**

Dreaming is our brain’s way of processing new information so it can be committed to memory. While sleeping, brain waves shift memories and new information from short-term to long-term storage –making it possible for us to retain what we learn and build on our knowledge. Sleep deprived people are 40% less capable of learning and retaining knowledge. Skipping out on sleep to cram for an exam won’t work, so give yourself 6-8 hours of Zzzz’s in order to get those A’s!

**4. This IS a Laughing Matter!**

Laughter truly is the best medicine, and side effects include reduced blood pressure, lower stress levels, and an increase of feel-good endorphins! During finals week, think bear-hugs rather than bearing it alone. Surround yourself with people who are good for your soul because even a simple hug releases oxytocin which reduces the stress hormone cortisol! It’s true what they say: “We get by with a little help from our friends!”

Warm Winter Wishes from your BeWell Nutrition Coach,

Darian Leader, M.S. ‘14

[BeWell@chc.edu](mailto:BeWell@chc.edu)

Integrative Nutrition Coach

Candidate: Certified Personal Trainer (NASM)