

## Stay healthy and happy this Canadian winter

Winter is here, and you may be tempted to slow down your physical activity and stay inside. Despite the freezing temperatures and blustery winds, there are safe and easy ways to keep up your exercise habit. Maintaining your workouts is good for your mood, brain and your body.

In Canada, we can sometimes have particularly chilly winters. For outside activities, be sure to wear layers and keep your head, hands and feet warm with a hat, gloves and appropriate footwear.



### Go on shorter, more frequent walks

The weather can hold you back from longer walks. When the temperatures are lower, trade your typical 45-minute walk for three 15-minute walks spread throughout the day. The overall step count will be the same, but the walks will be easier to tolerate.



### Think beyond the walk

Winter sports and activities can be a great way to get in your steps. Get out on the rink for some ice skating. Go cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Get out the shovel and clear the snow from your sidewalk or driveway. However, if you ever experience any unusual symptoms (chest, back, arm or jaw pain, shortness of breath, lightheadedness, etc.), stop the activity and seek medical attention.



### Bring Fido along for inspiration

Need motivation to get outside? Look no further than your dog! Snap on the leash and take short walks a few times a day. You'll both feel better!



### Get in your activity at home with an online class

If you just can't bear to go outside, find a dance, aerobics or other cardio fitness class online. There are lots of free options these days, and the steps really add up!



### Clean your house

Get out your vacuum and other cleaning supplies and do a deep clean of a room—or the whole house! An hour of good cleaning can rack up a surprising number of steps. Just think of how happy you'll be to relax afterward in your sparkling living room.



## Winter blues: Managing seasonal sadness

As we head into winter, many people are ready to cozy up and be charmed by the comforts of colder weather. Others feel significant sadness. If you feel down and isolated around the same time every year—with an urge to hibernate—seasonal affective disorder (SAD) may be worth looking into.

**SAD is a seasonal depression that occurs in the late fall and winter, impacting 15% of Canadians.<sup>1</sup>**

As the days shorten and temperatures drop, our moods can change. For some, SAD affects them at the same time every year, usually during the winter when natural light is scarce.<sup>2</sup>



### What are the signs of SAD?

Many symptoms of SAD are the same as regular depressive symptoms. They occur in a seasonal pattern. These include:<sup>1</sup>

- Feeling hopeless, helpless, "empty," or worthless
- Low energy, fatigue or feeling "slowed down"
- Sleeping problems (unable to fall or stay asleep, oversleeping)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Feeling irritable, frustrated or restless

SAD can also include symptoms such as:<sup>1</sup>

- Feeling tired, even with increased sleep hours
- Feeling sad or guilty
- Weight or appetite changes, carbohydrate cravings
- Loss of interest in hobbies or fun activities
- Social withdrawal



### Who is at risk?

While SAD can affect anyone, some people are more likely than others to experience seasonal depression, including:<sup>3</sup>

- Women, who are diagnosed with SAD more often than men
- Adults over 18 are found to be at higher risk of SAD
- People who live in colder climates, where there are fewer than 12 hours of available daylight



### Can you prevent SAD?

SAD may not be able to be prevented. But there are things you can do to ensure you're in the best place heading into the months with less daylight. These include:<sup>3</sup>

#### Go outside

Whether you're being active or just enjoying the sun, being outdoors during daylight hours is one of the best ways to nourish your mind and body. Even sitting next to a window at work can help if you're not getting enough sunlight.

#### Eat well

Speaking of nourishment, eating a healthy diet—lean protein, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, less sugar, and processed foods—goes a long way. There's a strong link between food and mood.

#### Focus on self-care activities

Carving out time for yourself and doing things you enjoy is critical.

#### Spend time with friends and family

Make plans and stay connected to your community as much as possible.



### Managing SAD

If you think you might have SAD, talk to your doctor. Some common treatments include:<sup>3</sup>

#### Light therapy

Since wintertime SAD rears its ugly head when we have fewer daylight hours, experts believe that symptoms improve with exposure to therapeutic light. If spending more time outdoors is not effective or possible, light therapy may be prescribed.

#### Counselling

Speaking with a therapist trained in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) can help you rework negative thoughts and behaviours into more positive ones.

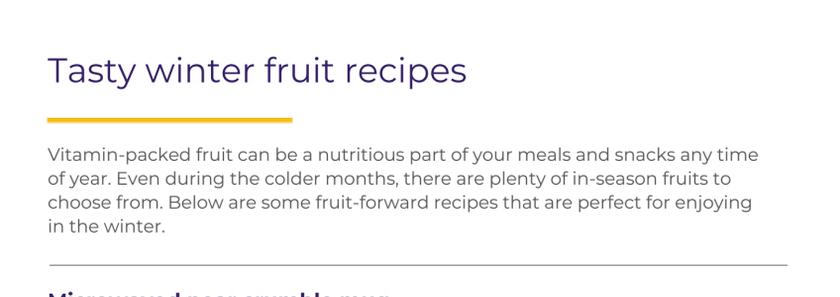
#### Medication or supplements

For people who often experience SAD, certain antidepressants and/or vitamin and mineral supplements may help. You'll need to talk to a psychiatrist about what may be right for you.

Undiagnosed, untreated or uncontrolled medical conditions can lead to similar symptoms, so thorough evaluation by a medical professional is key to ensure you receive the best care and the right treatment options.<sup>1</sup>

**Being proactive and taking care of yourself as you head into the winter season can help keep the winter blues at bay.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://cpa.ca/psychology-works-fact-sheet-seasonal-affective-disorder-depression-with-seasonal-pattern/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/ol/en/plus/274-you-are-not-alone>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://cmha.bc.ca/documents/seasonal-affective-disorder-2/>



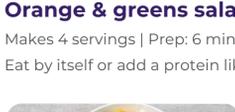
## Tasty winter fruit recipes

Vitamin-packed fruit can be a nutritious part of your meals and snacks any time of year. Even during the colder months, there are plenty of in-season recipes to choose from. Below are some fruit-forward recipes that are perfect for enjoying in the winter.

### Microwaved pear crumble mug

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 3 minutes | Cook: 4 minutes

Top with a scoop of yogurt, some blueberries and banana for a sweet breakfast or even dessert.



#### Ingredients

- 1 pear, chopped
- 2 Tbsp water
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract
- 2 Tbsp rolled oats
- 1 tsp ground flaxseeds
- 1 tsp unsalted butter, softened
- 1 Tbsp chopped walnuts or almonds

#### Prepare:

In a microwave-safe mug, combine pear, water, cinnamon and vanilla. Microwave on high for about 2 minutes, until pear is softened. While the pear is cooking, mix the oats, flaxseeds, butter and walnuts or almonds until it resembles granola. Mix the pear in the mug, and top with oat mixture. Place in microwave and cook for another 1-2 minutes.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: ¾ cup



Calories: 206 | Total fat: 9 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 6 mg | Cholesterol: 5 mg  
 Total carbs: 30 g | Fiber: 7 g | Sugars: 14 g | Protein: 4 g | Potassium: 264 mg

### Orange & greens salad

Makes 4 servings | Prep: 6 minutes

Eat by itself or add a protein like salmon or grilled chicken to make it a more filling meal.



#### Ingredients

- 6 cups mixed greens
- 2 medium oranges, sliced into thin rounds and quartered
- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup crumbled goat cheese
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp champagne vinegar

#### Prepare:

Toss the greens, oranges, onion, goat cheese and almonds together in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil and vinegar. Toss the salad with dressing just before serving.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: 1 ¾ cup



Calories: 371 | Total fat: 17 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 103 mg | Cholesterol: 1 mg  
 Total carbs: 46 g | Fiber: 15 g | Sugars: 15 g | Protein: 11 g | Potassium: 653 mg

### Pomegranate salsa

Makes 4 servings | Prep: 5 minutes

Spoon on top of plain grilled fish or chicken to turn a standard meal into something special.



#### Ingredients

- 1 cup pomegranate arils
- ½ cup finely chopped cucumber
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped onion
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tsp lime juice

#### Prepare:

Toss all ingredients together in a bowl. Chill in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: 1/3 cup



Calories: 33 | Total fat: 1 g | Saturated fat: 0 g | Sodium: 1 mg | Cholesterol: 0 mg  
 Total carbs: 7 g | Fiber: 2 g | Sugars: 5 g | Protein: 1 g | Potassium: 105 mg

### Apple-cheddar melt

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 3 minutes | Cook: 6 minutes

Serve with 1-2 cups of your choice of vegetable, or select a side to help complete a balanced meal.



#### Ingredients

- ½ apple, medium, thinly sliced
- 1 slice low-fat, low-sodium cheddar cheese
- 2 slices sprouted, whole grain bread

#### Prepare:

Layer thin apple slides and cheese between bread slices. Broil or toast for 6 minutes.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: 1 sandwich



Calories: 297 | Total fat: 12 g | Saturated fat: 6 g | Sodium: 206 mg | Cholesterol: 28 mg  
 Total carbs: 36 g | Fiber: 6 g | Sugars: 13 g | Protein: 14 g | Potassium: 256 mg

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