

# Wellness Newsletter



September 2024

ISSUE #12

“Educate for Wellness, Knowledge for Life”

## From Summer Ease to Fall Focus

As summer comes to an end, the transition into fall often brings a shift from the relaxed, carefree days of warm weather to a more structured routine. The long days filled with sunshine, vacations, and spontaneous outdoor activities gradually give way to shorter daylight hours, cooler temperatures, and a return to school, work, or other commitments. This change can sometimes feel abrupt, especially after weeks of enjoying a slower pace. Preparing for this transition can involve reorganizing daily schedules, setting new goals, and reestablishing habits that support productivity and balance.

With fall comes an opportunity to embrace a more organized lifestyle. It's a season that naturally lends itself to routines and structure, from the start of a new academic year to the settling back into regular work patterns after the summer holidays. This period is ideal for setting new priorities, whether they involve health and wellness, professional development, or personal growth. Adjusting to this shift can be aided by creating to-do lists, developing a consistent morning routine, and planning out weeks in advance to manage time effectively. By taking these steps, the transition from summer to fall can be smooth and invigorating, paving the way for a productive season ahead.



“WHENEVER YOU FEEL  
HOPELESS **FALL** ON TO JESUS,  
HE NEVER **LEAVES**”

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# 10 fall-focused healthy tips



1. **Embrace Seasonal Produce:** Incorporate fall fruits and vegetables like apples, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, squash, and Brussels sprouts into your meals. These are rich in vitamins, fiber, and antioxidants.

2. **Warm Up with Soups and Stews:** Prepare hearty and healthy soups and stews packed with lean proteins, legumes, and seasonal vegetables. They are comforting, filling, and can be made in bulk for easy meals.



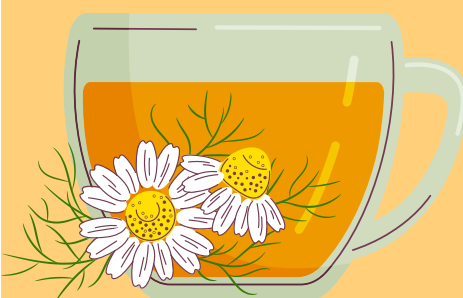
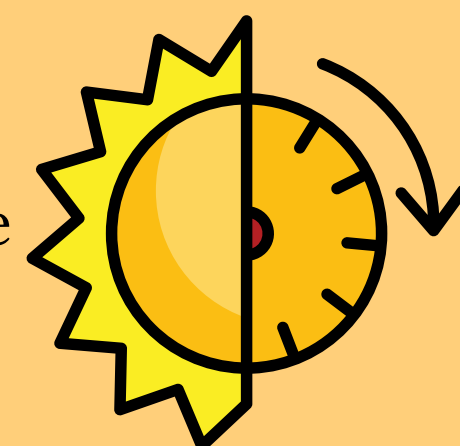
3. **Stay Active Outdoors:** Take advantage of the cooler weather by going for hikes, nature walks, or bike rides. Enjoy the fall foliage and fresh air while getting your daily exercise.



4. **Boost Your Immune System:** Include foods rich in vitamins C and D, like citrus fruits, leafy greens, and fortified cereals. Consider taking a vitamin D supplement if you're not getting enough sunlight exposure.



5. **Prepare for Shorter Days:** With shorter daylight hours, aim to spend time outdoors during daylight to get natural light exposure. This can help regulate your sleep-wake cycle and boost mood.



6. **Make Cozy Herbal Teas a Habit:** Replace sugary drinks with herbal teas like chamomile, peppermint, or ginger, which are warming, hydrating, and can help with digestion and relaxation.

7. **Try Indoor Workouts or Classes:** As it gets colder, consider indoor exercises like pilates, or strength training. These can help maintain fitness and flexibility.



8. **Focus on Sleep Hygiene:** With longer nights, establish a calming bedtime routine, like reading a book, practicing meditation, or using essential oils to promote better sleep.

9. **Practice Gratitude and Mindfulness:** Fall is a great time to slow down and reflect. Start a gratitude journal or engage in mindful practices like deep breathing or stretching.



10. **Plan Ahead for Holidays:** With the holiday season approaching, plan healthy meals and strategies to balance indulgence with nutritious choices, keeping moderation in mind.



These fall-focused tips can help you make the most of the season while staying healthy.

***Which ones are you most excited to try?***



# You Deserve **A GREAT DAY!**

Every morning when you open your eyes, you have a chance to start over. This is a powerful mindset, and embracing it ensures a strong start to every day. Morning meditations, intention setting, and affirmations are powerful ways to set a positive tone for the day ahead. Assembling a self-care toolkit helps start every day with empowerment, positivity, and hope.

Individual rhythms and preferences will dictate what works, but the key is to find yours and stick with it. Once these practices become routine, their benefits will grow.

Everyone's self-care toolkit is different:

- Launch the day with meditation/prayer.
- Take the time to workout.
- Begin with a healthy breakfast and a quiet cup of coffee or tea.
- Start with an affirmation, a positive statement that provides meaning, and say it to yourself out loud.

When you begin this process, it is essential to be patient, give yourself a chance to embrace the concept, and allow the time and space for the tools to work. Maintaining this practice will start the journey toward positivity. Let's do it!

## Taming the Fear Within

Fear is a powerful emotion with a strong effect on our minds and bodies. It produces symptoms such as accelerated heartbeat and breathing, sweating, weakened muscles, upset stomach, dizziness, and tension. Anxiety is closely related to fear; it relates to worries, thoughts or anticipations of future events, and can be equally debilitating on mental and physical health. Anxiety is a longer-term condition in which some fear symptoms persist, and can result in mental issues such as moodiness, lack of sleep, inability to focus, and isolation.

### How to conquer fear

It is natural to feel fearful and anxious on occasion, and when these feelings lurk, there are many effective ways to contain them.

### TRY these 5 approaches:

- **Acceptance:** Recognize that overcoming fears involves growth and requires facing the fear, not avoiding it.
- **Assessment:** If you avoid situations that scare you, you might miss what you need or want to do. Evaluate these episodes, and do not let your fear dominate.
- **Awareness:** Know yourself. Keep a journal to track your triggers and patterns to help correct them.
- **Action:** Practice relaxation techniques: Meditate, take a walk, listen to music or a podcast, read, breathe.
- **Association:** Connect spiritually to something bigger than yourself, which helps ease anxiety by reducing isolation.

If you experience fear and anxiety for longer than a few weeks and symptoms impact your daily life, please consult your doctor or a mental health professional.

### Adopt A Growth Mindset

1. Strive for progress, not perfection.
2. Get comfortable with what you don't know.
3. Accept that the path to success includes mistakes, growth, and change.





## Nurturing Connections: The Heart of Holiday Wellness

As the holiday season approaches, it's essential to prioritize our social connections for overall wellness. As the holiday season begins taking time to connect with family and friends can significantly impact our mental and emotional well-being. Whether it's gathering for a meal, reminiscing over past traditions, or simply reaching out with a heartfelt message, these moments remind us of the strength and support we find in our relationships. Research consistently shows that strong social ties can reduce stress, enhance feelings of happiness, and even boost immune function, making them especially valuable during this busy time of year.

Building stronger social connections, particularly with family and friends, takes intentional effort. The holidays provide the perfect opportunity to reconnect with loved ones and deepen these bonds. It could be through revisiting shared memories, starting new family traditions, or engaging in activities that allow for quality time. Strengthening these connections can offer a sense of belonging and security, reminding us that we are part of a supportive network, even when life feels overwhelming.

To strengthen these meaningful connections, consider planning activities that encourage interaction and togetherness. Whether it's a family game night, a virtual gathering for those far away, or volunteering as a group, these moments help create lasting memories. Even simple gestures, like taking a walk with a friend or sending a handwritten note, can go a long way in strengthening bonds and reinforcing the importance of human connection during the holidays.

By nurturing our social relationships with intention, we enhance not only our own well-being but also the lives of those around us. The warmth and support we cultivate within our circle of loved ones enrich the holiday experience, reminding us that the true essence of this season lies in the connections we share. So, as the holidays draw near, let's take the opportunity to build stronger, more meaningful connections with the people who matter most.



## Fostering Family Togetherness: Tips for a More Connected Holiday

### Creating New Traditions Together

While family traditions often bring comfort and joy, consider creating new ones that everyone can enjoy. Whether it's a holiday movie marathon, baking a favorite family recipe, or having a craft night, shared experiences create lasting memories and strengthen family ties.

### Prioritize Quality Time Over Quantity

With the busyness of the holiday season, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Instead of worrying about being together all the time, focus on the quality of the moments you share. Setting aside intentional time for a family dinner, a walk, or even a cozy evening in can deepen bonds and create meaningful connections.

### Encourage Open Communication

Holidays can sometimes bring stress, so fostering an environment of open, honest communication is key. Encourage family members to express how they're feeling, share their thoughts, and listen without judgment. This practice helps build trust and mutual understanding, creating a stronger emotional connection.

### Engage in Acts of Kindness as a Family

Volunteering together, donating to a cause, or even doing small acts of kindness for neighbors or friends as a family can strengthen bonds. These shared experiences foster a sense of unity and purpose, reminding everyone of the joy that comes from helping others.

### Embrace Gratitude and Appreciation

During the holidays, take time to express gratitude for one another. Whether through a family gratitude journal, a round of sharing thanks at the dinner table, or a simple heartfelt conversation, acknowledging the positive aspects of your relationships fosters a deeper sense of connection and love.



# Understanding and Managing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

## Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs during specific times of the year, most commonly in the fall and winter months. As the days grow shorter and natural sunlight decreases, many people experience changes in mood, energy levels, and sleep patterns. While it's normal to feel a bit less energized in colder months, SAD goes beyond the "winter blues" and can significantly impact a person's daily life. It's important to recognize the symptoms and understand how this condition affects mental health.



## The Science Behind SAD

SAD is thought to be triggered by the reduced exposure to sunlight in the fall and winter, which disrupts the body's internal clock (circadian rhythm) and can lead to chemical imbalances in the brain. Specifically, lower sunlight levels are associated with decreased production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that contributes to feelings of well-being and happiness. At the same time, the body may produce more melatonin, a hormone responsible for regulating sleep, leading to excessive fatigue and sleepiness. This combination of chemical shifts can create the symptoms of depression that many people experience during the darker months.



## Recognizing Symptoms

Symptoms of SAD are similar to those of other forms of depression but are specifically tied to seasonal changes. People with SAD often feel persistently sad, hopeless, and irritable. They may experience low energy, increased sleep, changes in appetite (especially craving carbohydrates), and weight gain. Many individuals also report difficulty concentrating and withdrawing from social activities. While SAD typically affects people during the fall and winter, a smaller number of individuals experience a spring/summer version of the disorder, characterized by insomnia, anxiety, and agitation.



## Managing and Treating SAD

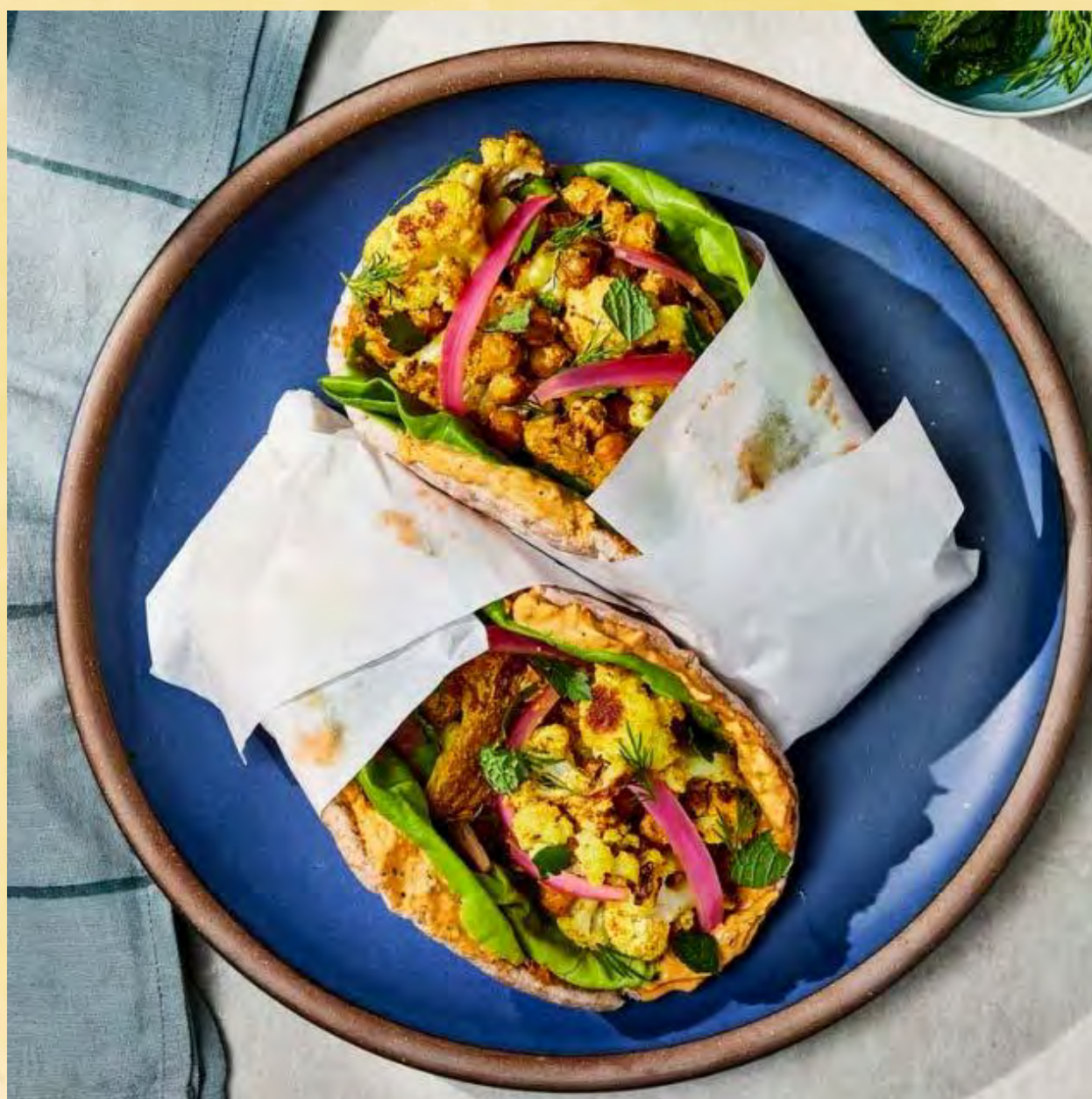
The good news is there are several effective treatments for SAD. Light therapy, which involves daily exposure to bright light that mimics natural sunlight, is often the first line of treatment and can help regulate circadian rhythms and improve mood. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has also been shown to help individuals manage the negative thoughts associated with SAD. In some cases, doctors may prescribe antidepressant medications, especially if symptoms are severe. Self-care practices like spending time outdoors during daylight hours, maintaining a regular routine, staying active, and eating a healthy diet can help alleviate symptoms and improve overall well-being. Understanding and addressing SAD can make the colder months much more manageable and help those affected lead a healthier, more balanced life.





## Featured Recipe of the Month

### CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICH



4. Drizzle 1/2 cup of the yogurt mixture over the roasted cauliflower and chickpeas; toss to coat evenly.
5. To assemble, spread the remaining 1/2 cup yogurt mixture over pitas. Top with lettuce leaves. Spoon the cauliflower mixture over the lettuce (about 1 1/2 cups each). Drain the onions; divide among the pitas. Garnish with additional torn herbs, if desired.



### Ingredients

- 1 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup mini shredded-wheat cereal
- 1/4 cup fresh raspberries
- 2 teaspoons mini chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon



### Directions

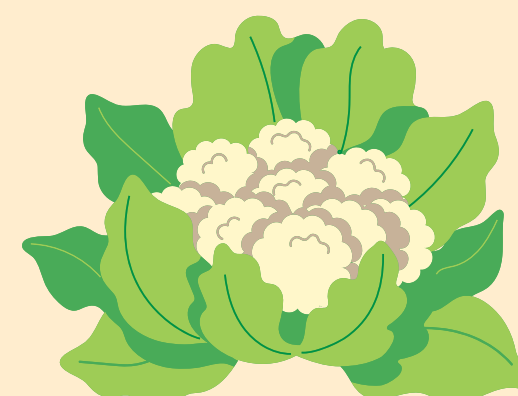
1. Place yogurt in a bowl and top with shredded wheat, raspberries, chocolate chips, pumpkin seeds and cinnamon.

### Ingredients



- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup water plus 3-5 tablespoons, divided
- 2 teaspoons pure maple syrup
- 1 1/4 teaspoons salt, divided
- 1 medium head cauliflower (2 1/4 lbs.), broken into bite-size florets (about 8 cups)
- 1 (15-oz.) can no-salt-added chickpeas, rinsed and patted dry
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/2 cup whole-milk plain strained (Greek-style) yogurt
- 1/2 cup packed tender herbs, such as dill, mint or parsley, plus more for garnish
- 1/3 cup julienned sun-dried tomatoes with herbs, drained
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon harissa paste
- 4 (6-inch) whole-wheat pita rounds
- 8 leaves Bibb lettuce

### Directions



1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Place onion in a medium heatproof bowl. Combine vinegar, 1/4 cup water, maple syrup and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a small saucepan; bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Pour over the onion; set aside to pickle for 30 to 60 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Meanwhile, toss cauliflower, chickpeas, oil, cumin, coriander, garlic powder, turmeric and 1/2 teaspoon salt together on a large rimmed baking sheet; spread in an even layer. Roast, stirring once, until the cauliflower is tender and golden brown, about 30 minutes.
3. Combine yogurt, herbs, sun-dried tomatoes, tahini, lemon juice, harissa and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in a food processor or blender; process until smooth, about 1 minute, scraping down the sides as needed. With the motor running, drizzle in the remaining 3 to 5 tablespoons water until the desired consistency is reached.

## Sweet Treat of the Month

### RASPBERRY YOGURT CEREAL BOWL





## 5 Essential Tips for Financially Responsible Holiday Planning

To prepare financially for the holiday season, here are five tips for setting yourself up to be financially responsible:

1. **Create a Budget:** Start by outlining all potential holiday expenses, including gifts, travel, decorations, and parties. Set a realistic spending limit and stick to it to avoid overspending.

2. **Save Throughout the Year:** Instead of relying on last-minute funds, save a small amount each month in a dedicated holiday fund. This proactive approach spreads out the financial burden and reduces stress during the holidays.

3. **Shop Smart:** Look for discounts, compare prices, and consider shopping during sales events like Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Use coupons and cashback offers to maximize savings on gifts and essentials.

**BLACK FRIDAY**  
SALE

4. **Avoid Impulse Purchases:** Stick to your budget and avoid making spontaneous purchases. Plan your shopping list in advance and prioritize meaningful gifts over extravagant ones to stay within your financial limits.

5. **Consider Alternatives:** Explore cost-saving alternatives such as homemade gifts, Secret Santa exchanges, or hosting potluck dinners instead of lavish parties. These options can reduce expenses while still fostering holiday cheer and togetherness.

By following these tips, you can enjoy a financially responsible holiday season without the stress of overspending.

## Health Tip of the Month

### Eat more fiber

Fiber is essential for digestive health and helps maintain steady blood sugar levels. It can also lower cholesterol and support heart health. Aim to include more fiber-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes in your diet. Not only will this improve digestion, but it can also help with weight management by keeping you fuller for longer. Gradually increase fiber intake to avoid digestive discomfort, and don't forget to drink plenty of water!



## Quote of the Month

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do."

— Steve Jobs



## Fitness Tip of the Month

### Incorporate Daily Stretching

Stretching for just 10-15 minutes a day can improve flexibility, reduce muscle tension, and prevent injury. Focus on full-body stretches, targeting key areas like your hamstrings, back, and shoulders. This can also help improve posture and reduce the risk of muscle strains, especially for those who sit for long periods or engage in physically demanding jobs!

