

# HEALTHY *You!*

Your Source for a Happy and Healthy Lifestyle

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## THIS EDITION FEATURES:

Activities to Celebrate  
the Season

Feel-Good Foods

Comfort by the Spoonful

The Power of  
Social Support

A Healthier  
Holiday Season

Move Your Body,  
Boost Your Mood

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# Activities to Celebrate the Season

The holiday season offers the perfect opportunity to create special memories with friends and loved ones while fully embracing the festive spirit. Whether you prefer outdoor adventures or indoor gatherings, there are countless ways to celebrate and connect.

For outdoor enthusiasts, bundling up for a fun winter activity like ice skating or taking an evening walk through the neighborhood to admire holiday lights can make the season magical. Not only do these activities keep you active, but they also allow you to enjoy the crisp air and beauty of winter. If you are fortunate enough to have snow, then sledding, building a snowman, or organizing a snowball fight is a great way to get everyone involved while embracing your inner child.

For those who prefer staying indoors, baking is a fun and delicious way to bond with others. Hosting a cookie exchange, creating do-it-yourself (DIY) ornaments, or crafting handmade gifts adds a personal touch to the festivities. If you're in the mood for relaxation, plan a holiday movie marathon with popcorn and hot cocoa to bring everyone together for a cozy night in.

If you are looking to give back, organizing a charity drive or volunteering at a local shelter can help you bring the spirit of the season to others.

Ultimately, the key to a joyful holiday season is balance. By combining festive fun with quiet moments of relaxation, you can create lasting memories that will bring happiness and fulfillment into the new year and beyond.



# FEEL- GOOD FOODS

Looking to stay focused and energized? Snacking on something sweet might give you a quick boost, but sugary foods cause energy crashes, which can actually make you feel worse.

Instead, look to foods high in omega-3 fatty acids. Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, and mackerel have positive effects on brain health and mood. If you prefer plant-based options, try walnuts, chia seeds, and dark leafy greens.

Blueberries and strawberries are packed with vitamin C, which helps combat stress. To reduce anxiety, snack on cashews, which are rich in magnesium, zinc, and vitamin B6. Brazil nuts are a powerful source of selenium, which has been shown to improve mood and cognitive function.

Lastly, foods like bananas, turkey, and chickpeas support the production of serotonin, a key hormone that enhances feelings of well-being.

Mindful eating can help balance your mood and keep your stress levels in check.

Sources:  
[health.clevelandclinic.org](https://health.clevelandclinic.org)  
[healthline.com](https://healthline.com)

# Comfort by the Spoonful

There is nothing more satisfying on a chilly day than a hot bowl of soup. In addition to being comforting, its high water content helps you stay full and hydrated.

If you are reaching for canned soup, be mindful of sodium and fat. Try broth-based varieties like tomato or vegetable instead of creamy options. High-fiber soups with beans, such as minestrone, are a nutritious choice. Always check for natural flavorings and avoid added monosodium glutamate (MSG).

If you prefer homemade soup, you can either follow a recipe or experiment with what you have on hand. Start with a simple broth base and toss in your favorite veggies, beans, or lean proteins. As it simmers, the comforting aroma will add to the relaxing experience.

Homemade soups are a healthy, simple option that you can prepare in bulk and freeze for later.

Next time you're craving comfort, try making some flavorful, nutrient-rich soup.

Sources:  
[henryford.com](http://henryford.com)  
[eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com)





## RECIPE

# Holiday Cookie Dough Bites

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### Ingredients

- 1 cup + 2 tbsp oat flour
- ½ cup cashew butter
- 3 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tbsp coconut oil, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla
- Pinch of salt (if using unsalted nut butter)
- ½ cup 60% cacao dark chocolate chips

### Optional

- Additional ½ cup 60% cacao dark chocolate chips
- Holiday-themed sprinkles

### Directions

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl until well combined.
2. If mixture is too wet to roll into balls, chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
3. Roll into balls.

Recipe makes about 12 dough bites.

### To add optional chocolate drizzle:

1. Line a small cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place balls on the parchment paper.
3. Melt ½ cup dark chocolate chips and drizzle over the balls.
4. Top with festive sprinkles.

Dough bites can be stored in the refrigerator or freezer. Frozen bites should be defrosted for a few minutes before eating.

# THE POWER OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Strong social and emotional support can enhance your health and longevity. It is not about how many friendships you have, but rather the depth of the relationships that make you feel loved and cared for.

Your support network can include a significant other, friends, relatives, or even a pet. You might also find emotional support through involvement in a social group, sports team, or charitable cause.

Sources:  
[takingcharge.csh.umn.edu](http://takingcharge.csh.umn.edu)  
[ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

Healthy relationships are built on the following principles:

- **Honesty and trust.** Share feelings using “I” statements, like “I feel upset when...”
- **Emotional respect.** Acknowledge each other’s feelings, even when you disagree.
- **Listening.** Take time to ask about thoughts and emotions.
- **Kindness and affection.** Show appreciation and offer compliments regularly.

Nurturing these qualities strengthens your emotional well-being and creates bonds that can support you through life's challenges.





# A Healthier Holiday Season

The holidays are a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness. However, they can also bring added stress and disrupt your healthy habits. The good news is that with a little planning you can enjoy a healthy holiday season.

## To take care of your physical health:

- **Don't do too much.** Make time for relaxation.
- **Share the load.** Divide responsibilities among family members.
- **Simplify.** Scale back on elaborate preparations.
- **Exercise.** Stick to your workout routine.

## To take care of your emotional health:

- **Simplify traditions.** Focus on what truly brings you joy.
- **Scale down gift-giving.** You'll likely find support from others.
- **Be social.** Spend time with loved ones or meet new people through volunteering.



# MOVE YOUR BODY, BOOST YOUR MOOD

We all experience stress and anxiety sometimes, but regular physical activity can be an effective way to manage your mental health. Exercise helps reduce feelings of depression and anxiety by giving your mind a break from worries and releasing endorphins, the “feel-good” chemicals that enhance your sense of well-being.

In addition to improving mood, physical activity can increase self-confidence by helping you meet personal goals and feel better about your body. Exercise also supports better sleep, which can often be disrupted by stress and anxiety.

It's easy to find ways to incorporate more movement into your day. Here are some ideas:

- Roll out a yoga mat for mindful stretching.
- Take a walk to clear your head.
- Do some cardio to elevate your mood.
- Dance to your favorite music for a quick energy boost.

Incorporating regular movement into your routine is a simple yet powerful way to support your mental health and overall well-being. By making time for physical activity, you can reduce stress, lift your mood, and feel more balanced every day.



# MONTHLY QUIZ

**1. Which of the following is a mental health benefit of exercise?**

- A) Increased anxiety
- B) Boosted self-confidence
- C) Disrupted sleep
- D) High levels of stress

**2. Which of the following can make the holidays healthier?**

- A) Skipping relaxation
- B) Doing everything yourself
- C) Sharing responsibilities
- D) Attending every event

**3. Which of the following nutrients found in oily fish and walnuts supports brain health and reduces stress?**

- A) Vitamin C
- B) Selenium
- C) Omega-3 fatty acids
- D) Magnesium

1. B, 2. C, 3. C

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