

Eating Smart: Winter Warm-Ups

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

When the temperature drops, we turn to warm foods and drinks. Start with soups and stews. Use a slow cooker or simmer on the stovetop if you prefer. Most soups and stews start with a vegetable base (think carrots, onions, celery and mushrooms), which contribute to your daily intake.

Most recipes then add protein, such as beans, lentils, chicken or fish, and are rounded out with a carb-boost from noodles, rice, quinoa or potato.

Oatmeal, porridge or congee is a great way to warm up at breakfast. Add some protein with Greek yogurt, nuts and seeds, and serve with berries for a complete meal. And don't forget beverages. Coffee and tea are great choices.

Spice it up. Adding spices to soups, oatmeal and warm drinks will provide flavor, but spices also literally warm your body. One recent study found that drinking warm beverages infused with ginger provided longer-lasting warmth and improved cold sensitivity better than placebo beverages with no ginger. Try adding ginger to chicken soup or carrot-sweet-potato soup, or enjoy ginger tea. Add one teaspoon of fresh ginger to boiling water and steep for five minutes.

You can also use cinnamon or nutmeg in porridge, or add a dash of cayenne to chili or a blend of cumin, cardamom and turmeric to curries and stews.



Your Heart: Sleep on It

Are you getting enough sleep? A third of adults don't meet the minimum seven hours of bedtime sleep daily to maintain good overall health, and good cardiovascular health in particular. Chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to a higher risk for several heart-related conditions — high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, heart attack, obesity, diabetes and stroke.

Ongoing deficit sleep or interrupted sleep may reduce the time you spend in the deep stages of sleep that benefit your heart and help prevent serious cardiovascular problems.

Sleep and blood pressure: During normal, healthy sleep, blood pressure drops by 10% to 20%. Lacking sleep, your blood pressure may stay elevated, potentially leading to high blood pressure.

Sleep and artery disease (atherosclerosis): Ongoing poor sleep triggers chronic inflammation and hardening of the arteries.

Sleep and heart failure: A study of 400,000 people revealed a strong connection between sleep problems and heart failure.

Sleep and heart attack: The deep non-REM (rapid eye movement) sleep phase helps your heart rate slow down and recover from stress. In one study, people sleeping fewer than six hours per night had a 20% higher chance of heart attack.

Sleep and stroke: Sleep deprivation increases blood pressure, a leading risk for strokes.

If you have ongoing poor sleep, wake up to solutions:

- Meet with your health care provider to identify obstacles to good sleep.
- Stick to a regular sleep schedule daily.
- Get regular exercise (avoid near bedtime).
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet.
- Avoid caffeine late in the day.
- Minimize screen use before bedtime.



Burnout Busters

Don't ignore job burnout; find ways to relieve it. Burnout can impact your physical and emotional health, reduce your ability to do your best work and impact your personal life, too.

There's no quick fix for burnout. But these strategies can help you feel better over time:

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Heart Attack Recovery

Although experiencing a heart attack is frightening, many people recover and live full lives after a heart attack. While it's not unusual to worry about another heart event occurring, talking openly with your health care provider about ways to help your heart attack recovery are important.

After a heart attack, your cardiologist will use imaging and other tests to see what heart damage may have occurred and how your heart is functioning. Then your health care team will create a treatment plan to help you recover from your heart attack and prevent experiencing another one.

According to the American Heart Association, these measures are key for heart attack recovery:

Take prescribed medications as directed.

Depending on your individual case, you may need treatment for high blood pressure and unhealthy blood cholesterol. Anticlotting drugs, such as aspirin, may be prescribed.

Commit to a healthy lifestyle. Work with your health care provider to reach a healthy weight. If you smoke, create a quit plan with your provider. Following recommendations for a heart-healthy diet is important, too.

Participate in a cardiac rehabilitation program.

Many people are afraid to exercise after a heart attack, but physical activity, especially if started slowly, can help heart attack recovery and improve your mood, too. Talk to your provider about the program that's right for you.

Get support. Talk to caring friends and family members about your heart concerns. Sharing with other heart attack survivors can help.

Follow up with your provider regularly. Keep all appointments and don't hesitate to contact your provider's office with any concerns.

Health Care Plan Basics

Understanding how your health insurance coverage works is vital to accessing your benefits, getting the right care and protecting your health.

First you need to understand health insurance terminology. Following are some key definitions.

In-network: Refers to physicians, other care providers, and medical facilities that deliver patient services covered through your plan. In-network providers are generally the most cost-effective option.

Waiting period: Typically 90 days after the start of employment before employees can enroll in their insurance plans.

Open enrollment: A window of time during which you can apply for health insurance or modify a plan to include your spouse and/or children.

Pre-existing condition: Any chronic disease, disability or other condition you have at the time you apply for health care coverage under your plan. In some cases, symptoms or ongoing treatments related to pre-existing conditions can increase your premium.

Premium: The amount you pay for health coverage each month.

Deductible: The amount you must pay out-of-pocket before your coverage starts. Typically, the lower your premium, the higher your deductible.

Co-insurance: The amount of money you owe to a medical provider once the deductible has been paid, usually a predetermined percentage of the total bill.

Coordination of benefits: A process applied by individuals who have two or more existing policies to ensure that their beneficiaries do not receive more than the combined maximum payout for the plans.

Referral: An official notice from a qualified physician to an insurer that recommends specialist treatment for a current policyholder.

For more detailed information about your coverage, contact your health care plan's customer service or use its members' portal.



Burnout Busters *Continued from front. >>*

- **Talk to your supervisor** to find compromises or solutions for problems at work. Set goals for what must get done and what can wait.
- **Get more physical activity.** Burnout can make you feel exhausted so you don't exercise. Break this vicious cycle by exercising, even if it's simply a daily walk.
- **Prioritize self-care.** Try meditation and other relaxation techniques. Stick to a regular bedtime and healthy meals, too.
- **Talk to your health care provider** or a mental health specialist if you need help. Although it's not a medical diagnosis, burnout is linked to a host of health risks, including depression, insomnia, irritability, increased risk of substance misuse, hypertension and heart disease.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Checkup: Your Heart**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V2tools.

