

# Vista

Your Canadian Guide to Healthy, Organic Living

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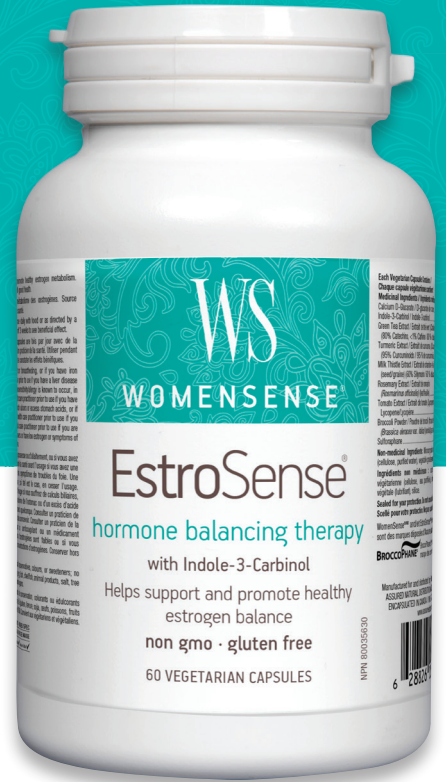
# ESTROGEN DOMINANCE?

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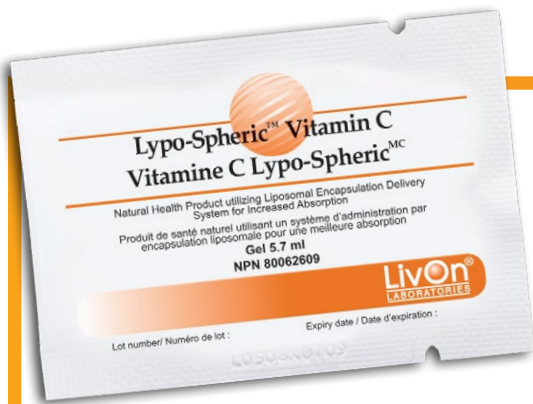


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– Julie Reil, MD

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Since Vitamin C is water-soluble, your body can't store it, and all the Vitamin C that doesn't get absorbed is excreted.

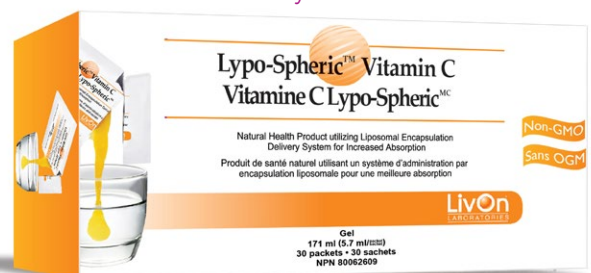
## Lypo-Spheric™ Vitamin C Is Easier to Absorb

Vitamin C encapsulated in fatty acid spheres (liposomes) doesn't rely on the active transporters. Liposomes are made with the same material that makes up your cell membranes, phospholipids. The phospholipids can easily pass through the intestinal wall and into the bloodstream where they make their way to the cells and assimilate through the cell membrane.

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# Spring: A Season Full of Promise

**SHHHHH...if you listen closely, you may be able to hear spring getting ready to make her grand entrance. I know as well as all of you that old man winter tends to hang on a lot longer than any of us would like, but this time of year is magical, full of promise, renewable energy and my word for this year: expansion.**

Spring was never my favourite season. I much preferred the crispness of fall; a time to turn inward, wrap up and get cozy. And while all that may still be true, I have a new found love and respect for this delicate season and everything it stands to offer.

I spent many years not really noticing all the finer details of life so spring was a season I wanted to rush through. It always felt slow to arrive and fast to be over, as it is in Ontario. As I became clearer in my mind, body and spirit, I started to appreciate spring for all of its many gifts. I remember the first spring that I really noticed was about six years ago. Walking through the Annex in downtown Toronto to one of my yoga studios, I noticed the crocuses, the tulips, the buds on the tree branches, the grass becoming greener, awakening of all things that had been asleep for so many months. That was an expansive time for



me (still is) as I was clearing away a fog, and cracking myself open. It was a metaphor for myself, really.

Spring may still be a few weeks away from truly revealing herself but I just couldn't help shifting gears in my kitchen. I created a stunning protein-packed pasta that offers a gorgeous array of spring vegetables with a light "creamy" sauce and yet is still hearty enough for our cool and damp weather. Think asparagus, wild mushrooms, green peas, zucchini and sprouts. Sprouts add superfood and enzyme power to any dish and really bring this one to life. For those of you worried about protein, I added in cannellini beans and for healthy fat, I used pine nuts and good olive oil. I can't wait for you to try the recipe! (See page 39) And be sure to check out the other great content we have in this issue. The focus is women's health and you will find a wealth of information to help support you both physically and mentally.

Spring is all about waking up, shedding layers and expanding. Let's do this together! It's been such a pleasure to be your guest editor for this issue. I wish you health, happiness and expansion for this and all the seasons to come.



**TERI-ANN CARTY** is a yoga teacher and Toronto-based photographer. She teaches vinyasa yoga classes and shares vegan, gluten-free recipes.

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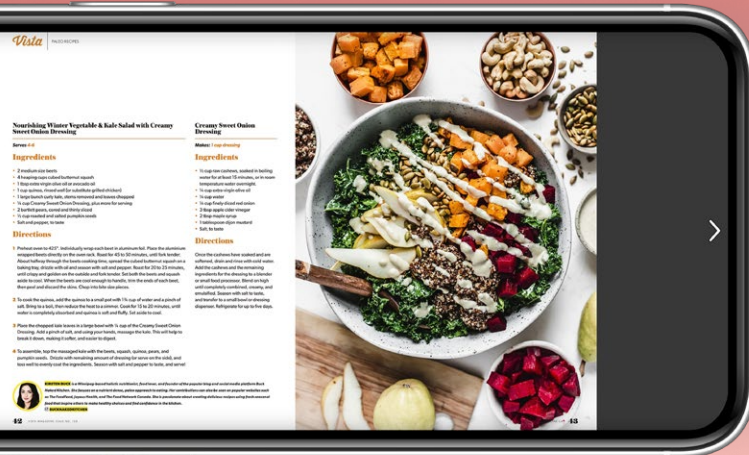


# Vista

Your Canadian Guide to Healthy, Organic Living

**No. 129**

MARCH/APRIL 2020



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The Women's Health Issue

No. 129 MARCH/APRIL 2020



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# Create a Menopause Rite of Passage

**It's a life stage that is all too easily medicalized and forgotten, and it doesn't need to be that way.**

**MENOPAUSE...DOES THE WORD AROUSE ANY POSITIVE FEELINGS IN YOU?** When you hear it or say it, what comes to mind?

Like far too many changes impacting our physical selves, menopause is highly medicalized. We think about symptoms, hormones, and medications, but we aren't encouraged to experience it as a passage of life, deserving of its own ceremonies. But, why would we throw a party for a baby's birth but not hold an event for our transition out of fertility?

Rituals and events that mark major milestones help us to embrace change. Menopause can be incredibly challenging for many women. Why not make room for celebration—or mourning—with an intentional rite of passage?

## 1 Host a Gathering



Just as with any other rite of passage, like a wedding or a birth, we choose people to surround us and help us acknowledge what is going on in our lives. When it comes to the end of fertility, and all of the changes your body and identity are undergoing, who are the people who matter most? It could be your immediate family, your extended family, a group of friends, a gathering of other women experiencing menopause... whatever makes sense to you.

## 2 Create a Ritual



What activities at this gathering could help you to formally mark this transition you are experiencing? In some traditions, such as Judaism, there are special prayers that can be recited for occasions like this. But just as there are wholly secular weddings, you can create a wholly secular menopause ritual. Perhaps you could take an object that you link with fertility and release it into a body of water. Imagine a gesture that would help you to express what you are feeling about the changes you're going through and then simply do it.

## 3 Share Experiences



Perhaps at this celebration you can create space to share meaningful stories. If you like, you can be the only one who speaks. Or perhaps you could encourage participants to share their own stories of menopause. You set the agenda. Remember, this is an opportunity to break the silence and create meaning with others.

# 6 Foods for Better Women's Health

Women's bodies need specific nutritional support to thrive throughout the various stages of their lives. These powerful foods have been shown to address issues specific to women, supporting their life-long vitality.

## 1 Sweet Potatoes

With their high vitamin A content, sweet potatoes can keep urinary tract infections at bay. They're also complex carbohydrates that give sustained energy and won't cause blood sugar spikes or mood disturbances.

## 2 Yogurt

Women in their child bearing and post-menopausal years need quite a bit of calcium to maintain strong bones. Plain yogurt is an excellent source of this essential nutrient, with plenty of other benefits, including potent probiotics for gut health.



## 3 Free-Range Eggs

Eggs are not only great sources of protein, but they're rich in choline. This essential nutrient has been shown to lower rates of breast cancer. Please choose cage-free, free-range eggs, not only for their humane benefits, but for their higher nutritional value.

## 4 Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Although it goes under-reported, cardiovascular disease is one of the top killers of women. Extra virgin olive oil is a boon to heart health, with its monounsaturated fatty acids. These lower LDL (or "bad") cholesterol and raise HDL (or "good") cholesterol.

## 5 Asparagus

Women who want to have children often take folate supplements to ensure healthy pregnancies. But asparagus is a naturally rich source of this nutrient, along with plenty of prebiotic fibre, which boosts gut health.

## 6 Lentils

These legumes are a potent source of plant-based iron, which many women tend to be low in. Plus, their fibre and protein content will provide energy, fullness, and better gut health. Keep anemia in check with frequent servings of lentils on salads and in soups.



**IMBALANCED:****3 IMPORTANT STATISTICS ABOUT HORMONAL IMBALANCES IN WOMEN**

**Hormonal imbalances greatly impact a woman's quality of life, but most of us aren't aware of what these impacts are, or how often they occur.**

Hormonal imbalances are shockingly common in women—especially when we consider how little understood the condition is. Women-specific imbalances are caused when there is too much or too little of certain reproductive hormones like estrogen in the body. And they can have a significantly negative impact on quality of life.

If you are suffering from a hormonal imbalance, you might choose a doctor's help to address the issue. Or there are solutions like supplements and dietary changes. Perhaps a combination of all of the above would work well for you. But to address the problem, you first need to understand whether it is affecting you.

Here are three statistics that are guaranteed to raise awareness of a condition that impacts far too many women:

**HALF ARE IMBALANCED**

**When the researcher Dr. Anna Cabeca surveyed 2,000 American women, aged 30 to 60, 47% of them reported experiencing the symptoms of a hormonal imbalance.**

*(Other studies have suggested that as many as 80% of women are hormonally imbalanced.)*

**SYMPTOMS ARE SURPRISING**

**In this same study, it was discovered that less than 41% of the women surveyed understood that memory loss, mental fog, and incontinence are all symptoms of a hormonal imbalance.**

**IT CAN BEGIN YOUNG**

**Finally, in this same study, the average age of women first experiencing these symptoms was 36.**

This is years before the onset of menopause for most women, which is part of the reason why the imbalance catches many sufferers off-guard.

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# Chaga Mushroom

**Growing wild in northern climates like Siberia and Canada, the chaga mushroom is one of the world's best sources of antioxidants. These lumpy-shaped black and orange fungi are known as "black gold"—and for good reason.**

## **Boost Energy**

Chaga can provide a big boost of energy and sustained physical endurance, making it a great supplement for athletes. A study in 2015 demonstrated that mice supplemented with the mushroom were able to swim longer distances with more fuel in their muscles and organs and less lactic acid in their bloodstreams.

## **Fight Cancer**

According to a growing body of medical evidence, chaga mushroom has the power to inhibit cancer cell growth. One study, which explored the fungus' impact on mice with tumors—including some with metastatic tumors—saw a 60 per cent reduction in tumor size, and a 25 per cent decrease in the number of nodules.

## **Fight Viruses**

Chaga is a mighty adversary when it comes to the complex world of viruses. Research is showing that it can effectively fight viruses such as hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (otherwise known as HIV). In one study, chaga took just 10 minutes to counter the infectious power of the hepatitis C virus by 100-fold.

## **Boost Immunity**

Certain foods have the rare ability to stimulate the production of immune cells that regulate the immune system and combat foreign bodies, like invading bacteria. It seems that chaga has this unique effect. In animal studies, it was shown to produce interleukin 6, T lymphocytes, and spleen lymphocytes.

## **Lower Inflammation**

It seems that chaga's high levels of antioxidants can significantly lower inflammation. That's because it has one of the world's highest "oxygen radical absorbent capacity" scores. That means it prevents and reverses oxidative damage in our bodies.



or



### **Organic or not?**

Natural health does not have to be confusing.

We are here to help.

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Visit **HealthierByNature.ca** to get all the answers.

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# Natural Nurseries

Preparing a space for a new arrival? Here are a few ideas for creating the ideal nursery with a natural, eco-friendly approach.

## 1 Wallpaper

If you're hesitant to choose wallpaper for other parts of your house, the nursery can be a place where it really makes sense. Choose cheerful, adorable, unique prints in breathable, PVC-, POC-, VOC-, and vinyl-free options.

## 2 Choose Safe Toys

Because they'll end up spending so much time in your child's mouth, choosing safe, non-toxic toys is a must. When you can, opt for toys made from sustainable, natural materials, like bamboo or organic cotton. Toys without batteries or small parts are also best.

## 3 Thrift It

Spend a little extra time searching through thrift stores and online marketplaces. You can find beautiful and unique pieces for your little one that won't break the bank or increase carbon emissions through their production.

## 4 Repurpose

An even lower-impact choice than thrifting is to find furniture that's already in your home and repurpose it. (You'll gain the added benefit of de-cluttering!) For example, maybe that end table could be a change table, or that bookshelf a place to stack diapers and onesies.

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Q + A WITH **TRACY BELL**, CO-FOUNDER OF **MILLENNIA TEA**

# Green Tea Reimagined

**Millennia TEA** co-founder **Tracy Bell** is on a mission to share the freshest and most antioxidant-rich tea anywhere. She shares with us how a health scare prompted her family to reimagine the way tea is processed, and to create a new global category for tea.



*Millennia's teas are the "most antioxidant-rich" anywhere. How do your teas achieve this distinction?*

Our fresh leaf teas maximize antioxidants because of the way we process, or perhaps more appropriately, how we limit the processing of our tea leaves. At Millennia TEA, we deliver tea in a way that's opposite to the rest of the world. We wash and flash-freeze fresh-picked organic tea leaves instead of drying and heating them like conventional teas. This way, we safeguard the benefits of the mighty tea leaf and maximize its ability to fuel wellness and prevent disease.

Millennia TEA is the world's first real, raw, whole food tea. The clean, undried tea is kept in its most naturally powerful form to deliver five times the antioxidants of a quality organic green tea, and is made from the very same tea leaves.

You can find Millennia TEA in the freezer section of the store, next to the superfoods and smoothie ingredients. And we encourage folks to use our products to supercharge their morning

smoothie. When you wash tea and keep it in its most real form, and then consume the leaf in its entirety (i.e. in the blender), you get the maximum amount of antioxidants a tea leaf can offer.

*Millennia's teas are also extremely fresh. Can you tell us why this matters and what the benefits of fresh tea leaves are?*

It's important to understand two critical things about tea to fully comprehend why fresh matters here. The first is that all teas start out from the same leaf, called *Camellia sinensis*. Its processing, or how the leaf is "cooked" after plucking, determines whether the finished tea will be a black "tea bag" tea, a loose leaf green tea or a white tea.

Secondly, there's some science. There's a powerhouse antioxidant in tea called epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) and it's really effective at fighting free radical damage and protecting cells. If you drink tea for health, you drink it for EGCG, whether you realize it or not.

EGCG levels are highest in fresh-

picked tea leaves, and drop off with prolonged exposure to heat, light and air. Interestingly, this is how all conventional teas are processed.

At Millennia TEA, we're on a mission to fuel wellness with the freshest and most antioxidant-rich teas anywhere. That means doing to tea what we do to our frozen fruits and veggies: picking them at their nutritional prime and flash-freezing to maximize freshness, flavour, and health.

The data is what gets us excited. One serving of fresh leaf tea is like drinking five cups of green tea. And if you put the tea in a blender and enjoy it like a fresh matcha, or pop it in your smoothie, you consume the whole leaf and get as many EGCG antioxidants as 15 cups of green tea, made from the very same leaves.

The health benefits of EGCG are extensive and well documented in scientific and medical research: from reducing stress and inflammation, increasing energy and supporting a healthy weight to slowing the aging process, supporting heart and brain health, and preventing certain kinds of cancers.



Tracy with her husband and Millennia TEA co-founder, Rory Bell.

As a bonus, fresh leaf tea doesn't have the bitter taste you get with conventional teas. The experience is light and refreshing, like travelling into the mountains of Sri Lanka, picking the leaves yourself and pouring boiling water on them.

*We know a health scare in the family is what led you to create the company, and a new category of tea. Can you tell us the story?*

In 2016, we had a cancer scare in the family. It was our first close encounter with the disease (which later turned out to be a misdiagnosis, thankfully). That event led my husband Rory and I to learn about things we had not previously considered. We learned about free radicals; how they're roaming around in our bodies and can lead to disease if not neutralized. And we learned antioxidants neutralize free radicals, and that the EGCG antioxidants found in tea are particularly effective at fighting free radical damage and protecting cells. EGCG antioxidants are highest in fresh tea.

We also learned thousands of years ago – a “millennia” ago – when tea was discovered, it was considered medicinal and was consumed with fresh leaves from the field. It was only when countries started exporting their tea overseas that they started drying and fermenting the leaves.

So we went searching for fresh tea. When we couldn't get it, we decided to create it. We wanted to give families like ours the chance to experience tea in its most real, raw, and naturally powerful form.

*What are the biggest challenges your company has encountered on the road to success?*

When you say the words “fresh tea”, most people can't picture what that means. We're creating a new global category of tea, and that requires a huge amount of public education. But we believe we're in the best position of any company in the world to tell the story of tea, and we're passionate about the potential for fresh-leaf tea to fuel wellness and fight illness.

Another challenge we face is finding tea farmers on the other side of the world with the ability and interest to make tea in a way that's different than what they've always done. We spent three years searching the world over for the right partners and tea origin. But we're there now, and beyond excited to bring fresh-leaf tea to the world.

*What's the company's vision for the future?*

Our vision is a world where people come together to enjoy tea in its most real, raw, and naturally powerful form, the way it was a millennia ago.



## Orange Gingerade Smoothie

This green smoothie will jump-start your day. It's jam packed with nutrients and antioxidants to stimulate a strong immune system, promote clarity, benefit your metabolism, and deliver a zen-like focus to fuel your best day. This recipe is the perfect amount for two smoothie servings.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup spinach
- 1 orange, peeled
- 1 banana, peeled
- ½ inch ginger root
- 1 Millennia TEA cube
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp hemp hearts
- 1 cup water or coconut water
- ½ cup ice
- *Other add-ins: 1 scoop protein powder, 1 tsp chia seeds, 1 tsp flax meal, 1 tsp spirulina*

### Instructions

- 1 Prepare solid ingredients and place them into a blender.
- 2 Add liquid and ice to the blender.
- 3 Blend for 90 seconds.
- 4 Enjoy!

# Mindfulness Practices for HPA Axis Dysfunction, aka Adrenal Fatigue

**Are you tired for no reason?  
Are you easily overwhelmed?  
Are you unable to get up in the morning without an extra cup of java? Feeling rundown or getting sick more than usual? Craving salty snacks? Are you gaining weight around your abdomen? Are you suffering from PMS?**

STEPHENIE FARRELL

**IF YOU'RE CHRONICALLY STRESSED AND YOU'RE EXPERIENCING SOME OF THESE SYMPTOMS, YOU MAY BE SUFFERING FROM HPA AXIS DYSFUNCTION.** But don't worry; there are simple things you can do to help heal your adrenals.

The adrenals are almond-shaped, walnut-sized glands that sit just above your kidneys and secrete the essential hormones cortisol and aldosterone. The hormone cortisol is involved in regulating metabolism, controlling blood sugar, and is an anti-inflammatory, while aldosterone regulates the salt/water balance in your body. In addition to secreting these essential hormones, your adrenals also secrete hormones such as adrenaline and noradrenaline in response to stress.

Your adrenal glands deal well with short bursts of stress but, in today's fast-paced world, most of your stress is chronic, coming from your



**STEPHENIE FARRELL** is an EFT practitioner, coach and yoga instructor, who teaches both private and corporate yoga. She's the founder of *Clarity.Power.Results. Coaching and the creator of Yoga Heals Lives™*. You can connect with her [@CLARITY\\_POWER\\_RESULTS](#)



emotional response to external situations that you often can't control or change. In prehistoric times, when there was a threat to our survival, like a predator chasing us, our adrenals would secrete adrenaline and noradrenaline to prepare us to fight, flee, or freeze in the face of life-threatening danger. This response would last only a few minutes and follow with a short recovery period. Unfortunately, your body can't tell the difference between the stress of fearing for your life and the stress you experience every day, such as with work, family issues, financial strain, or merely sitting in traffic. In response to this type of chronic stress, your adrenals are continually pumping out stress hormones. In time, your adrenals become fatigued, and you may start to feel exhausted, rundown, easily overwhelmed, and unusually irritable.

Stress management is an essential key to restore your adrenals. It also helps to manage the negative emotions and thoughts that arise due to stress. Developing a mindfulness practice such as meditation or yoga can be a great solution. I use daily meditation and a regular yoga practice to release stress and increase my clarity and focus while juggling personal and professional responsibilities.

Practicing a gentle form of yoga that focuses on slow flowing postures, intentional breathing, body awareness, and meditation all helps to shift your body from "fight, flight, or freeze" mode to "rest and digest" mode.

With private and corporate clients, I use gentle yoga, meditation, and breathing techniques that reset the nervous system, reduce stress, reduce feelings of anxiety and overwhelm, improve sleep, enhance productivity and increase focus. "Yoga Heals Lives" is a specialized yoga series I created for people seeking healing from difficult emotions, grief, adversity, and painful, often traumatic experiences. During the series, I teach people mind-body energy techniques they can use "in the moment" to manage stress, overwhelm, and feelings of anxiety and panic.

# Is Living Getting in the Way of Feeling Alive?

We often forget what it is like to truly be and feel alive because we are so busy living.

LEANNE SAWCHUK



**“SPOILER, WE DIE IN THE END”.** I recently came across this quote written by Atticus. Initially when I read it, I laughed a little and then just as quickly as the humour arose in me, it immediately stopped and I thought “but are we truly alive right now?”

We are busier now than we have ever been and not just physically busy, but mentally and emotionally busy. We are being encouraged to “practice the pause”, or to “embrace stillness”, but we are also encouraged to achieve more, do more, and be more.

We spend copious amounts of time wondering when the other ball is going to drop, living in the past or worrying about the future, that we lose complete sight of the present. We focus on chasing happiness as if it is some end goal that we must achieve, yet in the process of racing to the finish line, we detach from not only the present moment, but ourselves.

Then there is regret. I often meet with people who express regret over the time they feel they have wasted. They wish they had done things differently, that they didn’t work such long hours, that they spent more time getting to know who they were, or moved away from things (or people) that were dulling their fire. However, as cliché as it may sound, it is never too late to be and feel alive! I often give the example of people who are terminally ill and are given a prognosis. Suddenly they are jumping out of airplanes, travelling the world, shark diving, having difficult conversations, and the list goes on!

Listed below are some ideas that can serve as a starting point for you to dig a bit deeper and help you to recover your lost or misplaced self, which will allow you to feel more alive in the process.


### 1 Introspection

Take some time to reflect on the following: what truly leaves you feeling happy in life? When was the last time you truly felt alive? What were you doing (or not doing)? Who were you with (or not with)?

### 2 Say NO

We say YES a lot! Often, in order to lean into the experience of truly living, we may need to say no to that which is no longer serving us. It may be time to reflect on the things you are saying yes to when you want to say no, or not right now.



**LEANNE SAWCHUCK** is a registered psychotherapist and art therapist based in Kitchener, Ontario. She is the founder of Willow & Oak Psychotherapy and Counselling Centre and specializes in addictions, anxiety, depression, relationship issues, eating disorders, body image, and trauma.  **LEANNESAWCHUKTHERAPY**

### 3 The time is now

We spend so much time racing towards happiness, or living in the past, that we lose full sight of living and being in the moment. The only time that ever truly exists is right here, right now.

### 4 No more pity parties

Playing the victim will not help you to feel more alive. Self-pity is our worst enemy as it serves to keep us stuck. Next time you catch yourself saying that you cannot do anything about your current life situation, think again because you can should you choose to.

### 5 The golden rule

You get back what you put out. This does not mean we should give to receive, but this does mean that the energy that we are offering is what will return to us. It was the Dalai Lama who said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

### 6 Practice simplicity

Some of the greatest pleasures in life can be found in simplicity. Research has shown that over-consumption does not equate to happiness, but simplicity does. Reflect on the simple things that you truly enjoy, write them down, and then create space to experience them.

### 7 Get your love on

We are hard-wired for connection and we feel the most alive when we are getting our love on! Spread this love to others, the world, and towards yourself because when we operate from a place of love, we set our soul on fire!

You do not need a prognosis to start living! Instead, you can choose to make different choices and decisions in your life and show up for yourself in a way that you never have before. Rather than merely existing, go where you feel most alive because what’s a finish line without some incredible stories and memories to share along the way!

# Are Edibles Safer Than Smoking Cannabis?

ALEXANDRA ARMSTRONG

## Edibles are often advertised as a safer way to consume cannabis than smoking or vaping it, but is that really true?

When the Canadian government legalized cannabis in October, it didn't include edibles. This has left many of us in a consumer "grey zone," unclear about which products are legal and which are safe. Edibles are easily available online and marketing materials proclaim them as "smoke-free" and "natural" ways of consuming cannabis. The truth, however, is more complex. Read on to learn about the differences between eating and smoking marijuana and the problems of ingesting unregulated products.

### What is an edible?

An edible is what it sounds like: a food product that contains cannabis. Usually producers lace the food with an oil containing the active ingredients of cannabis — THC and sometimes CBD. Edibles usually come as candies or baked goods, but you can also get them in a drink format.

### What are the differences between edibles and smoking marijuana?

Both ingesting and smoking cannabis will get you high. Both can cause the uncomfortable side effects associated with marijuana use. The major differences between the two methods of consumption are the duration of the high and the speed of its onset. Smoking or vaping cannabis causes effects within minutes, with most sensations wearing off after two to three hours. With an edible, the THC enters the bloodstream through the stomach and liver. This means that it can take up to an hour and a half for the psychoactive effects to be felt, with one study showing that subjects felt the peak of their "high" three hours after ingestion.

### Labelling

Because edibles are still illegal, there is no labelling oversight. This means there's no way of knowing if a product's THC or CBD content is accurate. Product labels also don't have to indicate a maximum amount to take. This leaves consumers unclear as to how much will get you "high." With cannabis-infused gummies for example, an unaware user might eat the entire package, when in fact one might contain enough of the drug to get you high. Baked goods are even more complex, as you're likely to have difficulty gauging the appropriate serving size when instructed to eat merely one-sixth of a cookie.

### Is it risky to buy edibles?

As with any food product, it's important to consider the conditions it's made in. The health department isn't likely to inspect a company that's making illegal products. Because of this, there's no real way of knowing if the company abides by basic food handling guidelines. Not to be gross, but how do you know the producers don't use butter that's been sitting around unrefrigerated for two weeks? Or that they wash their hands before they start? Inspections can't completely guarantee this either, but they can help ensure food handlers keep guidelines in mind and set penalties if they see they're being ignored.

When it comes to illegal producers of edibles, the provenance of the drug itself also becomes an important question. When a company produces illegal cannabis products, there's no way to be assured of the quality of the drug used. Legal cannabis retailers must conform to certain guidelines and have their product inspected, but illegal edible operations exist without oversight. Marijuana that is contaminated with mold, mildew or illegal insecticides can cause severe health issues for consumers, ranging from breathing problems to muscle pain. Buying edibles online means there's no guarantee that the drug in the product are fit for human consumption.



## How much is too much?

Reading that last paragraph might have you thinking that making your own edibles is your best option. But before you go ahead with that, you'll want to consider some additional factors. We wrote earlier about speed of onset and length of high, and both are crucial to remember when using edibles. A common problem affecting users with edibles is thinking you haven't consumed enough because of the lag in effect. You may eat more, thinking you haven't taken enough to get the desired reaction. By the time you start to feel the effects, you've already taken too much. And because the "high" lasts longer and peaks later with edibles, if you do accidentally over consume, you could be stuck feeling the effects for hours.

## Dosing

Inconsistent dosing is a concern both when making your own and when purchasing (illegal) edibles. It can be quite difficult to evenly distribute the drug throughout the product. And when purchasing cookies, gummy bears or whatever, we don't know what the producer's level of knowledge is or how they're dosing the product. It's possible that one gummy has one dose, and another has twice that amount of THC.

While edibles can seem like a safer alternative to smoking or vaping cannabis, it's important to remember that they are still illegal. Purchasing cannabis edibles means using products that may not conform to health and safety standards. Some may even contain harmful additives. Waiting until they are legal and regulated is the best way to protect yourself from unnecessary risks.

**“The major differences between the two methods of consumption are the duration of the high and the speed of its onset.”**

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\*This article was originally published prior to legalization, so some of its observations and recommendations are no longer relevant. However, it still includes valuable information, and for this reason, we have chosen to republish it.



Originally published by [\*Maple\*](http://Maple (getmaple.ca)) ([getmaple.ca](http://getmaple.ca))  
*Maple connects Canadians to licensed doctors online in minutes for advice, diagnoses, and prescriptions, 24/7/365.*

# Keeping up With Your Fitness Goals All Year Round

Top tips to keep you  
on track when you have  
lost your motivation

TIANA POLLARI



**TIANA POLLARI** is a holistic nutritionist and personal trainer based in Toronto. She coaches women on how to achieve sustainable weight loss by taking a functional approach to training and nutrition. [@TIANAPOLLARI](#)

**WE ARE NEARING THE END OF THE FIRST QUARTER AND BEGINNING OF THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE YEAR AND NOW IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO CHECK IN WITH THOSE FITNESS GOALS YOU SET FOR YOURSELF AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR.** At this point, you are either still on track or you may have lost motivation along the way.

It's understandable. Change, consistency and commitment can be both daunting and overwhelming. As a personal trainer and nutritionist, I see clients experience these challenges all the time and after a month or two, their old habits have slowly returned.

If there is one thing I believe, it's that change is always possible - no matter what. Getting back on track and back to a routine can be done by taking small steps. And if you are unsure of how to do that, then don't worry because I'm going to share with you my top tips for getting back - and staying - on track when you have lost motivation.

### ① Determine your WHY

Your 'why' will set the tone for your actions. So, you need to be clear about why you are doing what you are doing. Maybe it's to play with your kids and not be out of breath or maybe you want to lower your cholesterol. Whatever that 'why' is, you need to keep it at the forefront and if at any point you find yourself losing focus, simply go back to it. Let that 'why' push you and motivate you to keep going.

### ② Having the right mindset

Along with your 'why', your mindset is going to be everything in how you approach your goals. I can't stress that enough. You need to commit to what it is that you want and believe that you can do it. There will be plenty of setbacks along the way and moments where our mind isn't necessarily 100 per cent in it, but what matters most is how we handle those setbacks and moments. To believe in yourself means to trust yourself. With that trust, belief and remembering your 'why', you will be able to stay focused on the end result. Don't worry about what others may be doing, just worry about what you're doing.

### ③ Too much too soon

I see this with clients all the time: they want to do everything...all at once. While I admire the enthusiasm, you should also be realistic as to what is sustainable for your lifestyle. For example, it may not be the best idea if you're a busy mom running a household, then starting a new workout program and doing a Whole 30 cleanse at the same time. Start with one small change and once it has become a habit and you feel comfortable, only then should you look into adding in something new.

### ④ Be patient with yourself - results take time

We all want results and we want them fast. As cliché as it sounds, your fitness journey is a marathon, not a sprint. The patience you have with yourself goes hand in hand with the too much too soon approach. As you ease into your new routine or program, you will also need to be realistic about your timelines. Sustainable and effective change will take time, and just like any marathon, you will need to pace yourself accordingly.

### ⑤ Choose the right activity for you

The reality is you have to enjoy what you are doing. If you don't, then chances are you will lose interest quickly and likely not stick it out. It's important to recognize what suits your personality. Some people thrive in a group environment while others don't. Large gyms or group classes can be intimidating and make some people feel self-conscious. If that's the case, then look into smaller boutique style gyms or invest in one-on-one sessions with a personal trainer. Either way, find a way to make it work FOR YOU.

### ⑥ Find an accountability partner

Everything is easier in pairs and having that friend who shares the same energy as you and who's there to cheer you on goes a long way. They'll be there to give you that little extra push you may need and hold you accountable when you feel like giving up. You will feed off each other's energy and encouragement and you'll both feel committed to keep moving forward.

# Vista

## AMBASSADORS

We're all about women's health this issue, with a little dose of spring inspiration. Plug into our **Vista Brand Ambassadors** as they give you the knowledge and tools to help you crush your health goals this season, and beyond.



↑ **MAE SANTOS** is currently completing her dietetic internship in Manitoba with a degree in Human Nutritional Sciences. Mae brings her passion for food and health to work and in her personal life. She uses her Instagram platform to create easy recipes and promote evidenced-based nutrition practices and is looking forward to starting her career in dietetics this spring.

**FUN FACT** Mae is a self-taught baker and perfected French macarons at 16!

📷 **MAESANTOS**

← **LINDSAY YOUNG** is a nutritionist and lover of food from around the world. She's passionate about making healthy, home cooked food that is accessible and approachable for everyone. She hosts workshops in her home town of Kelowna, B.C., sees clients and works as a recipe developer and food photographer.

**FUN FACT:** "I would love to live in a tiny home one day to experience living with less!"

📷 **EATYOUNGNUTRITION**



Find us **@VistaMagCanada** and follow **#VistaMagCanada** and **#VistaAmbassador** for healthy tips, recipes and more!



↓ **KAT KRIVANEK** is a registered holistic nutritionist, certified personal trainer and owner of Kat Krivanek Nutrition, specializing in weight loss, healing the gut, balancing blood sugar and women's health. Her goal is to help empower clients to make healthy food and lifestyle choices. She believes in eating real food and creating simple and delicious recipes that fit a busy lifestyle.

**FUN FACT** "I'm obsessed with travel. I love experiencing different cultures, sightseeing and of course trying all sorts of new foods! Thailand and Spain are at the top of my foodie list, and Nicaragua for its beaches, hikes and relaxing vibes."

📷 **KATKRIVANEKNUTRITION**

🌐 **KATKRIVANEKNUTRITION.COM**



↑ **ALESSANDRA GOES** is the name and face behind Coconut and Cashews. She started her journey with Coconut and Cashews to share her experiences with a plant-based diet and how it can change lives from the inside out. "I absolutely love how we can heal our bodies and our minds through the foods we eat," says Alessandra. She has a particular interest in anti-inflammatory diets that help cope with chronic stresses in our bodies. And she believes eating whole foods is a true act of self-love and the benefits are endless; from having a more balanced lifestyle, to having more energy, less inflammation, a sharper mind and becoming the happiest versions of ourselves.

**FUN FACT** "I was born in Brazil, and I have always loved adding tropical and exotic flavours, like coconut and cashews, to my food creations."

📷 **COCONUTANDCASHEWS**



↑ **MIRIETA SELIMI** is a Toronto-born foodie and aspiring registered dietitian. Her motto? All foods fit! From a young age, Mirieta recognized that the science behind living well is complex, and so are the reasons behind what we choose to eat. After having completed her undergraduate training in nutrition and psychology, she has learned how to simplify nutrition and help others better pilot their own (realistic) journey toward improved health.

📷 **THESWEETENEDPEA**



← **ANNALIISA KAPP** is a mother to two amazing girls and takes pleasure in creating new and inspiring recipes. Her journey to become a registered holistic nutritionist - specializing in stress relief and hormone balance - started a decade ago when she became a certified yoga instructor. This is when she met like-minded individuals passionate about using whole food, mindfulness, and movement to restore the body into a state of well-being. Follow her on Instagram for recipes, workshops, and empowering nutritional strategies!

**FUN FACT** Annaliisa is currently studying Mandarin and TCM acupuncture.

📷 **ANNALIISAKAPP**



↑ **EMMA MCNICHOL** is a registered nurse, women's health educator, and holistic nutrition student. She is bridging the gap between conventional and holistic wellness for women. Emma is passionate about helping women achieve their optimal life through empowerment and education. She co-founded the journal company (project inside) out and the online women's health school Empowered Academy.

**FUN FACT** Emma believes there's no such thing as TMI. Her goal is to help women feel fiercely confident in their body while crushing the taboo on reproductive health matters.

📷 **IAMEMMAGEORGE**

# Stevia and its many uses

BY: DR. THALIA CHARNEY, MA

NUTRITION AND HEALTH EDUCATION MANAGER, NOW FOODS

## IS STEVIA FOR YOU?

If you have never tried stevia, there is no time like the present. It has many benefits including being calorie-free and naturally derived from a plant leaf. If you ever get the opportunity to taste a stevia leaf, you will be shocked at the insanely sweet taste of this leafy green. If you are new to stevia, I suggest that you follow some existing recipes before botching your grandmother's favourite cheesecake recipe while meeting your new in laws. Try to simply replace sugar in your favourite beverage or use it as a substitute for a portion of the sugar in baking.

## TASTES CAN VARY

Some people are not crazy about the aftertaste of stevia. Taste varies by brand so try them out. You may even prefer a product where stevia is combined with another natural sweetener like erythritol or monk fruit to temper its taste. You can also get flavoured stevia drops. Try maple-flavoured stevia in melted butter over your popcorn or a berry-flavoured stevia in yogurt. The possibilities are really endless.

## A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY!

Did you know that stevia is 100 times sweeter than sugar? A single packet of stevia marketed for a single beverage is much too sweet for some and just right for others. If you are new to stevia, then start with a taste test directly on your tongue. This will give you an appreciation for its profound sweetness. Ignore the suggested dose and try just a "smidgen" spoon, otherwise known as a "doonk" or 1/32 teaspoon.

**THALIA CHARNEY** is an author, educator, speaker and the Nutrition and Health Education Manager for the NOW® Brand in Canada. Thalia brings a wealth of experience from her many years as a health coach and nutrition expert as well as her insights gained from having authored Canada's most comprehensive book on navigating food products: *The Confident Food Shopper: The Guide to Food Labels and Fables*.

## TIPS TO BLEND STEVIA

If you like stevia, but in moderation only, a useful tactic is to combine stevia with other sweet ingredients like banana, cinnamon, dark chocolate or carob powder. Another tip is to use a bit of salt; salt masks the taste of bitter flavours and therefore can help temper the taste of stevia. One other suggestion is to avoid using stevia with acidic ingredients, simply because acid tends to bring out the bitter taste of any food.

## FILL HER UP LADY!

Unfortunately, when you take away the sugar in a recipe, you also may be a witness to the collapse of a formerly wonderful structure. You will need to make up for sugar's bulking abilities. A common recommendation is to replace about one cup of sugar with 1/3 cup of a bulking agent. This could include egg whites (or reconstituted egg white protein power), apple sauce, fruit puree or yogurt.



# Vista

## FEATURED PRODUCTS

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Yoga teacher Teri-Ann Carty opens up about her past struggles with alcohol and shares how yoga and a plant-based diet has helped transform her life.

# Taking her Life Back

*You are open about your past struggles with addictions. Can you share with us about your recovery journey and how your work fits into it?*

My recovery journey is such an integral part of my life. Without my sobriety, I would have a very different story to tell. I have been on the road of recovery now for just over eight years and to say that it has changed my life would be a massive understatement. Alcoholics Anonymous got me sober and yoga saved my life. Everything flows from that. Every class that I teach and basically everything that I do from photography, to creating vegan dishes, you name it, is an extension of me taking my life back and getting sober.

*How did you become a yoga teacher and a recipe creator?*

Yoga had been a part of my life in college and for several years afterwards but eventually alcohol and partying took over, leaving very little room for yoga. Three months after getting sober, I decided I needed to celebrate. I was beyond proud of myself and so I decided to take myself on a yoga retreat that a friend of mine was hosting in Nicaragua. That week changed the course of my life. It was my “ah-ha” moment. It took me another three years to quit my job as general manager of a high end restaurant to travel the world and take my first teacher training. I took myself to Mexico, Bali, Thailand, India and London, England for the better part of seven months. I had never done anything like that before. Was I scared? You better believe it but I did it anyway. It was the best growing experience ever.

I took the plunge into a fully plant-based diet very shortly after I quit drinking but it took some time to fully embrace how fun and creative vegan cuisine could be. I have loved to cook for a long time, learning from watching some of the best chefs in our great country in the restaurants that I worked in. I had to learn from the ground up when it came to plant-based and at the time I often asked myself how am I going to do this?

*Why should people consider going vegan and gluten-free? Why are you passionate about this style of eating?*

Well this is quite a loaded question! When I first started eating vegan, it was purely a health choice. I was raised eating meat and come from a family of hunters so eating meat was a way of life in my hometown of Brockville, Ontario. When I quit drinking and smoking (I quit both on the same day and I had smoked for



24 years), so much of my life changed. I stopped eating gluten, dairy and meat right away to see how that would feel. It wasn't for the animals originally, I was just trying to eat more consciously. I was reading Kris Carr's *Crazy Sexy Diet* at the time and she would write about how dairy and meat were super acidic for the body and how we should eat more alkaline foods. So that's what I did! I kept eating fish for some time but then started seeing some pretty nasty stuff online about big fisheries and what is happening in our oceans. Something switched and I couldn't do it anymore. I started to learn about the impact of farming and what it was doing to our planet. I am passionate about this way of eating for so many reasons. It's fun, creative, sustainable and I feel like I am doing my part to save the planet. It's not just about being vegan anymore, it's about the products I use and don't use to help reduce waste. I am nowhere near perfect, but I'm trying my best every day.

*What's one thing every woman should do to give herself a major health boost?*

Cut down on the booze and if you can't stop, seek help. We live in a world where alcohol has become so accepted and encouraged; wine with yoga, mommy wine clubs, you name it. I feel sad for



## “We should be encouraging women to feel their feelings, instead of drowning them.”

for this year and the hope is that people will leave these retreats feeling refreshed, grounded and more at home in their bodies. Retreats are so much more than the place you go. They are also the connections that you make with yourself. My future retreats will be 100 per cent substance-free and I am working on finding centres where I can create the vegan menus myself. My life partner Rick is an excellent cook and together I think we can create gorgeous, nutritious meals that will keep people coming back for more!

### *What’s your vision for the future?*

I literally just let out a big SIGH reading that question. My word for this year is EXPANSION. I feel like I’ve been doing some amazing internal work and getting very clear about what it is I want. I see more retreats with a photography component. I see more collaborations with magazines like Vista. I see travel and yoga retreats. I see a cookbook with all my own pictures. I see a wedding. I see lots of love, and I see more time well spent with Rick, my family and friends. I see a house in the country with a photography studio. I see writing, speaking and teaching. Above all else, I see a woman working her recovery one day at a time, loving herself more than she ever thought possible. That’s what I see.

the alcoholics in these clubs that feel justified to drink because society gives women the permission to take the edge off, to have a couple of glasses because “we deserve it”, or because “we work hard”. It’s sad and scary. We should be encouraging women to feel their feelings, instead of drowning them. And we should be encouraging them to drink a tall glass of warm lemon water before they eat or drink anything else in the morning. I’ve been doing it for eight years. It’s a great way to raise the alkaline levels in your body and get things moving in the morning. It’s your own little detox every single day.

### *What are your yoga retreats like? How does this format help you to teach people and help them transform?*

My retreats have always included two yoga sessions a day, plant-based meals and many opportunities to relax and enjoy the surroundings. The last two retreats I have done have been transformational for me. I am working on two more offerings



## Spring Pasta

### Lemon pine nut crema

- ½ cup soaked pine nuts
- ¼ cup water
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 small garlic cloves
- Pinch of chilli flakes
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- Salt
- Cracked pepper

**1** Soak pine nuts for minimum 1 hour.

**2** Add all ingredients to blender and blend until smooth.

### Vegan Parmesan

- 1 cup blanched almonds
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast
- ½ tsp sea salt

**1** Add everything to food processor and pulse to combine.

### Pasta (Serves 4 big portions)

- 1 bag of short noodles (I used mezzigrigatoni)
- 1 can cannellini beans (drained and rinsed thoroughly)
- 1 clove garlic
- ½ red onion
- 8 cups mixed mushrooms (I used cremini, black and white oyster)
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 ½ cups chopped zucchini
- 1 cup chopped asparagus
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Pinch chilli flakes
- Sprouts
- Vegan Parmesan

**1** Boil water for pasta. Preheat large pan (preferably one with a lid) and add olive oil. Add in onion and sweat for a couple of minutes, then add chilli flakes and garlic and cook until fragrant (about 30 seconds to 1 minute).

**2** To the pan, add asparagus and sauté for a couple of minutes, and add in mushrooms. Let mushrooms settle and cook for a couple of minutes and then start tossing everything together. If mixture looks dry, add a splash or two of pasta water to get things moving.

**3** Lastly, add in zucchini, peas and beans. Season with salt and pepper. I put a lid on the mixture for a couple of minutes to allow everything to really meld together.

**4** Once pasta is cooked, reserve 1/2 cup of pasta water before draining (I always rinse my pasta after cooking to take away any starchy residue) and toss pasta into pan. Add in crema and mix to combine. Add in reserved pasta water if desired for a creamier, smoother texture. Season with salt and pepper, vegan parmesan, sprouts and finally a drizzle of good olive oil.



# Vista

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT



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# Spring Into Action

Cook your way to balanced hormones with these delicious spring recipes.

KIRSTEN BUCK, HN

**SPRING IS HERE AND I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO CELEBRATE THAN WITH TWO LIGHT AND FRESH SPRING RECIPES!** Not only are they delicious and easy to make, they are both great for helping to balance hormones. There are many things to keep in mind if you're trying to naturally balance your hormones. Exercise, good sleep, and staying hydrated are key components. When it comes to food, making sure you're getting enough protein and healthy fat is essential, while lessening the amount of processed foods, hydrogenated oils and refined sugar.

Fatty fish is a great source of omega-3s, as well as a great source of protein. My Mini Mediterranean Salmon Burgers are perfect for busy weekdays, or for adding to a meal prep rotation. You can use fresh, wild-caught salmon, or wild-caught canned salmon - both work very well! Be sure to make these burgers small, as they are quite delicate and break easily when prepared too large in size. Serve as mini sliders, or keep it light with extra toppings like crisp butter lettuce, cucumber, and shallots. It is perfectly versatile! Finish with a dollop of delicious dairy-free tzatziki for the ultimate mediterranean feel and extra healthy fat and protein!

Tzatziki is usually made with full-fat greek yogurt. For this dairy-free paleo version, I used plain coconut yogurt and you won't be able to tell the difference! Mixed with grated cucumber, garlic, lemon and cumin, it's a spread you will continue to make in the summer months ahead. The recipe makes a little extra so cover, refrigerate, and enjoy throughout the week with vegetables, proteins, or crispy gluten-free bread.



## Mini Mediterranean Salmon Burgers

**Makes:** 10 mini burgers

### Ingredients

- 2-213 g cans wild caught salmon (or 1 pound skinless wild salmon fillet, see notes)
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup + 1 tbsp almond flour
- 1 small shallot, minced
- ¼ cup kalamata olives, seeds removed and minced
- 2 tbsp minced sundried tomatoes
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp avocado oil, for cooking
- Pinch salt and pepper
- Dairy-free cucumber tzatziki

#### Additional toppings:

- Butter lettuce
- Cucumber slices
- Sliced shallot
- Fresh tomato slices
- Substitute: gluten-free buns

### Directions

- 1 Transfer the fish to a large bowl and add the remaining ingredients. Separate the mixture into 10 small portions. Roll each portion into a ball, then flatten with the palms of your hands into a patty shape.
- 2 Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the burgers to the skillet and cook for two to three minutes per side, or until golden brown and edges start to crisp. If you are using fresh salmon, you may need to cook them one to two minutes extra.
- 3 Serve hot in a gluten-free bun with tzatziki and layer with additional toppings of choice, or wrap in butter lettuce for a low-carb option.

*Note: If you choose to use fresh salmon, cut the salmon fillet into 1-inch chunks, and add the pieces of salmon to a food processor. Pulse four to five times, or just enough to break down the fish into a chunky minced texture.*





### Dairy-Free Cucumber Tzatziki

## Ingredients

- ½ english cucumber (or 3 small persian cucumbers), ¾ cup grated
- 1½ cups plain coconut yogurt
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp dried dill
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- salt and pepper, to taste

## Directions

- 1 Cut the cucumber in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds in the centre, and discard the seeds. Using a box grater, grate the cucumber into fine shreds. Squeeze any excess liquid from the grated cucumber and transfer to a bowl.
- 2 Add the yogurt, lemon juice, garlic, dill, and cumin. Mix very well to combine and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover, and refrigerate until ready to serve.



**KIRSTEN BUCK** is a Winnipeg-based holistic nutritionist, food lover, and founder of the popular blog and social media platform *Buck Naked Kitchen*. She focuses on a nutrient dense, paleo approach to eating. Her contributions can also be seen on popular websites such as *The FeedFeed*, *Joyous Health*, and *The Food Network Canada*. She is passionate about creating delicious recipes using fresh seasonal food that inspire others to make healthy choices and find confidence in the kitchen.

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### **DID YOU KNOW THAT APPROXIMATELY 20 PER CENT OF WOMEN HAVE INADEQUATE IRON LEVELS?**

Common symptoms of low iron include fatigue, weakness, headaches, brittle nails, hair loss, dizziness, and shortness of breath. If you have some of these symptoms, there is a simple blood test to check your iron levels through your doctor.

So what causes low iron levels? A diet low in iron-rich foods, chronic blood loss from menstruation or other health problems, pregnancy, and vigorous exercise are some of the causes. Some women also become iron deficient if they are unable to absorb iron effectively. Lastly, 40 per cent of vegetarians and vegans may be iron deficient.

If you do have an iron deficiency, there are simple ways to boost your iron levels so you can start to get your mojo back.

### **Eat iron-rich foods**

There are two types of iron. Heme iron is from animal proteins like beef, chicken, clams, and oysters. Non-heme iron comes from plant-based proteins like lentils, kidney beans, peas, nuts, and white beans. When you are eating non-heme iron proteins, you need to add vitamin C to help with absorption. If you live a plant-based lifestyle like myself, you want to make sure you are eating a diet rich in non-heme iron protein sources paired with vitamin C from other fruits and vegetables to help with absorption, like this gorgeous white bean dip and veggie plate.

### **Iron supplementation**

Some people tolerate any form of iron, but many experience stomach upset and nausea. If this is the case with you, opt for whole food sourced iron supplements on the market. When taking iron supplements, stay away from coffee, dairy products, and fibre-rich meals for best absorption. Taking iron supplements every other day has been shown in studies to help increase the absorption of iron. Only take iron supplements under the guidance of your doctor.

# Are You Low on Iron?

**Boost your iron with some simple tips.**

CRYSTAL HUGHES



**CRYSTAL HUGHES** is a plant-based lifestyle expert and the creator of *Heart Fully Nourished*, a blog filled with healthy, nourishing plant-based recipes and wellness articles. Crystal is a registered holistic nutritionist, with a passion for helping people live a nourished life. She is a professional food photographer, and her work has been featured in international magazines. Check out her website at [HEARTFULLYNOURISHED.COM](http://HEARTFULLYNOURISHED.COM).

## Iron-Rich White Bean Dip

**Makes 1 1/2 cups of dip**  
(Served with vitamin C rich veggies for optimal absorption)

### Ingredients

- 1 can (540 mL) cannellini beans (salt-free if possible)
- 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice (1 lemon)
- ¼ cup + 1 tbsp tahini paste (sesame seed butter)
- ¼ cup parsley, finely chopped, loosely packed
- 1 tbsp fresh dill
- ⅛ tsp sriracha
- ¼-½ tsp salt depending on desired taste
- 1 large clove fresh garlic (approximately ½ tsp minced)

### Directions

- 1** Rinse cannellini beans in a strainer to remove canned juice.
- 2** Place cannellini beans into a food processor and pulse a few times. Then add in lemon juice, tahini, parsley, dill, sriracha, salt, pepper to taste and blend until smooth.
- 3** Serve with your favourite veggies. Bell peppers and lemon juice in the dip are high in vitamin C to help with non-heme iron absorption.

*\* To make beet white bean hummus, use the above recipe and add one small cooked beet chopped and blend.*



At the age of 10, Ana Bella knew she wanted to become a chef. Today, she is a Red Seal Chef and registered holistic nutritionist based in Vancouver, B.C. With her love for food and a passion for nutrition, Ana uses food as medicine to support herself and others. She finds joy in creating and sharing nourishing recipes for the mind, body and soul.

### *What is the link between trauma, anxiety, chronic pain and diet?*

Trauma is a distressing experience that can have adverse effects on a person's mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and social well-being. Chronic pain is a continued physical pain that lasts longer than what the natural process of healing should allow. Symptoms of anxiety and depression often arise alongside chronic pain. The main link is chronic inflammation. Inflammation is part of the body's defence mechanism and it is triggered when the body feels like it is in danger.

The state of our gut health directly affects both our physical and mental well-being. An overgrowth of "bad" bacteria in our guts can trigger inflammation in the body. With our Western diet being composed of processed foods high in refined carbohydrates, riddled with sugar and toxic additives, it is highly likely that those who have chronic pain are also suffering from poor gut health, without knowing it.

### *How can people with anxiety and depression eat to support themselves?*

High blood sugar is one of the biggest risk factors for depression. A diet rich in refined carbohydrates and processed foods is the main culprit of high blood sugar. To combat this, a diet composed of whole foods is the way to go! The brain is highly susceptible to oxidative damage so foods that are high in antioxidants would lessen bouts of anxiety and depression. My favourite antioxidants are ginger, turmeric, dark chocolate, kale, arugula, pumpkin seeds, avocados, blueberries and strawberries.

The main recommendation I give to my clients is to eat their greens and veggies first and then they can eat

whatever else they want. This way, they fill up on nutrient dense foods and won't have as much room for the rest.

But as important as a well-balanced diet is, it needs to be combined with restful sleep, body movement and self-love.

### *What inspired you to get involved with supporting people through food?*

As a child growing up in the Philippines, food has always been a big part of our culture. My family and I moved to Canada when I was 10 years old and taking food classes at a young age inspired me to become a chef. After a decade in the culinary industry, my own health started to suffer. I had low energy, a weakened immune system, terrible mood swings, indigestion, eczema and migraines.

I had my "aha moment" in 2012 when I decided to eat healthier. At that time, I didn't know any better and blindly followed a guide that advised consuming more wheat and dairy. Eating that way made me feel worse; I felt itchy, bloated and more fatigued. Even with years of cooking, I never once thought that what I consumed affected how I felt. Here I was experimenting with various diets and it finally hit me - there was a correlation between the food I ate and how I physically felt. Soon thereafter, I decided to go back to school to learn more about nutrition.

### *How do you support yourself as you support others?*

To support my own well-being, I cook deliciously nutritious foods, practice self-care, visit other health care practitioners and surround myself with people that I love and trust. A few things I do for self-care include walking around the seawall, dancing at iDance studios, going to a hot



yoga class, cleaning, journaling, diffusing essential oils, reading and drinking tea.

I have a physiotherapist for active rehab to support my recovery for my neck, back, leg and foot pain injury. I see a counsellor every couple of weeks for my mental health and I have an excellent massage therapist and acupuncturist to help get into those deep tissues.

I have a close friend who I can talk to about everything and I'm also pretty close with my siblings. Together, they give me advice in supporting my mental and physical health. Having close friends and family around for support is really important. It is all about community! As I get support from others and practice self-care, I am then able to support others that are going through the same thing. We all need each other!

### *Can you tell us about your nutrition and business workshops?*

I mostly teach cooking classes with a nutritional flare. I love getting people excited about eating healthy foods, particularly whole grains and vegetables that they don't normally eat. As a chef, I love to include cooking methods to enhance the flavours of the food. As a nutritionist, I try to balance nutrients in every dish that I make.

I've recently developed new plant-based classes for Cook Culture Cooking School and I teach at their downtown location for public and private events. I also run small workshops at The Bella Life House which includes fermentation, knife skills and healthy chocolate creations. And I am currently in the middle of writing a course that focuses on the basics of cooking with nutrition at its foundation. My plan is to start teaching this course in September. Stay tuned for that!

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