

WINTER WELLNESS

Optimise your nutrition and lifestyle for a healthy winter



FRANCESCA LANCASTER
www.francescalancaster.com

HELLO!

I'm Francesca

I have created this winter wellness guide to provide you with the tools and knowledge you need to feel your best, have more energy, and give your immune system all the support it needs during the colder months.

As a nutritionist, I am committed to bringing you the latest science-backed information, sorting the facts from the fads, and making it actionable, so that you can apply this knowledge to your every day life and thrive this winter.

Naturally there will still be viruses and other infections going around which may still affect you, however there is plenty that you can do to ensure this is far less frequent, shorter-lived and you bounce back quickly and easily.

Mood can also be concern for many during the colder, darker months. However it can be greatly improved through things like getting the right nutrients, sleep, daylight exposure and good gut health, all discussed in this guide. Read on for your healthiest winter yet....



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EATING THE RIGHT DIET FOR OPTIMUM WELLNESS

The absolute foundation of a healthy diet, regardless of your goal, starts with adopting a whole-food approach with a good emphasis on plant foods. This means eating foods that are as close to their natural state as possible and avoiding refined ultra-processed foods.

The benefits of a whole-food diet are twofold. Firstly, it cuts out the ultra-processed foods which are often high in sugar or refined carbohydrates, fats, sodium, and chemical additives. These foods are more likely to cause blood sugar imbalances (resulting in energy crashes and cravings) and inflammation, which can lead to obesity and chronic diseases over time, as well as putting a burden on the immune system.

Secondly, whole foods are MUCH more nutrient-dense than ultra-processed foods, which are often stripped during the refining process. Eating more nutrient dense foods gives your body so much fuel to function at its best, helping to support a healthy immune system, supporting metabolic and hormonal processes, providing better energy, and more.

If eating in this way is new to you, I would suggest an 80/20 approach where 80% of the time you eat natural whole foods, and 20% of the time you can eat whatever you want. This can make it more sustainable in the beginning, because you give yourself some leeway. But do be disciplined with the 80%. It's what you do most of the time, consistently, that's important.



EATING THE RIGHT DIET FOR OPTIMUM WELLNESS

To eat more whole-foods cut out:

- white refined carbohydrates (e.g. white bread, white pasta, white rice)
- breakfast cereals
- processed meats (e.g. ham, sausages, salami, etc)
- biscuits, cakes, and baked goods
- ready-meals and takeaways
- Ice cream, yoghurt, and other processed dairy products

Instead, opt for:

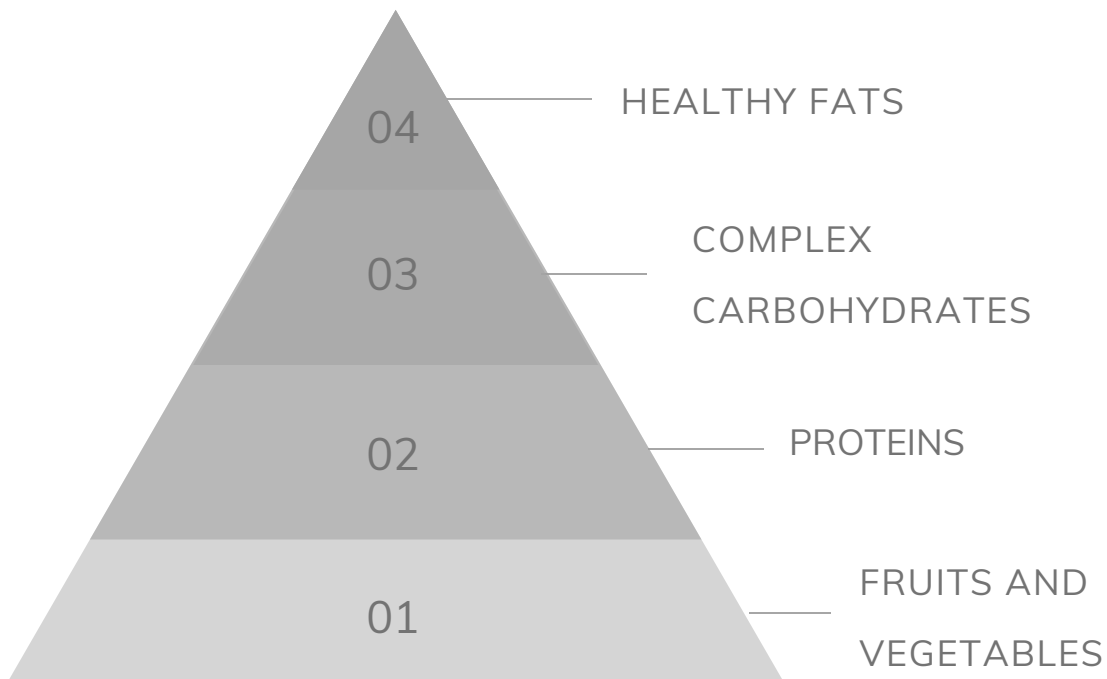
- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Fish, meats, and eggs (if you eat them)
- Good quality dairy (preferably organic)
- Legumes
- Nuts and seeds

On the next page, you will find your balanced day pyramid for an idea of the quantities that make up a healthy daily diet. This takes into account your macronutrients (proteins, fats, and carbohydrates) and your micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals) so that you will be covering all of your nutritional bases each day.

You will see that there is some overlap in food groups on the pyramid, as a few foods fall into just one category. For example, butternut squash can be classed as a complex carbohydrate, as well as a vegetable, and nuts can be classed as protein as well as a healthy fat. This just means you can tick them off in both categories. The pyramid will give you a good guideline to work with, to ensure that your day is well-balanced nutritionally, supporting your overall health and wellness.

Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants
- Michael Pollan

YOUR BALANCED DAY PYRAMID



01 The foundation of a healthy diet. Fruits and vegetables are rich in fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals. Ideally, aim for 7-10 portions per day (2 of fruit and the rest of vegetables).

02 Good sources of protein include eggs, fish, beans, peas, lentils, soya beans, tofu, nuts, seeds, tempeh, lean meats, some cheeses, and natural yoghurt. Aim for 3 portions per day.

03 Complex carbohydrates include whole grains such as oats, brown rice, and quinoa, and also starchy root vegetables such as sweet potato, butternut squash, etc. Aim for 2-3 portions per day.

04 Healthy fats include extra virgin olive oil, nuts, seeds, and avocado. Aim for 2 portions per day.

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS FOR IMMUNE SUPPORT

The following tables show some of the most important nutrients that are essential to include in your daily diet to best support your immune system to function optimally.

NUTRIENT	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR IMMUNITY	WHERE TO FIND IT
Vitamin A/ Beta Carotene	Enhances immune function by supporting white blood cells which identify pathogens and help protect the body from infection. Antioxidant properties.	Sources include liver and cheese, and sources of beta-carotene (the plant form of vitamin A) include dark green leafy vegetables, orange-coloured fruits and vegetables, tomatoes, and red peppers.
Vitamin B6	Assists in the production of new immune cells and antibodies.	Sources include fish, poultry, chickpeas, potatoes, bananas, egg yolk, soya beans, and dark green leafy vegetables.
Vitamin B12	Assists in the production of new immune cells and antibodies.	Sources include dairy products, meat, fish, shellfish, and eggs. Vegans must supplement vitamin B12.
Vitamin C	A potent antioxidant. Helps immune cells to attack pathogens and clear away old immune cells.	Sources include broccoli, peppers, melon, citrus fruits, strawberries, kiwi, and tomatoes. Cooking can considerably diminish levels of vitamin C, so consume some of the above sources raw each day.

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS FOR IMMUNE SUPPORT

NUTRIENT	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR IMMUNITY	WHERE TO FIND IT
Vitamin D	Low levels are associated with lower immunity levels. Boosts immune cell production.	Sunlight is the main source. Dietary sources include oily fish and egg yolk. Supplementation is generally recommended during the winter months due to the lack of sunlight.
Vitamin E	A potent antioxidant. Supports the function of white blood cells.	Sources include sunflower seeds, pine nuts, hazelnuts, peanuts, and avocado.
Iron	Necessary for the cell proliferation and maturation of immune cells.	Sources include dark green leafy vegetables, red meat, nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils. Vitamin C rich foods can enhance the absorption of iron in the body by up to 65% when eaten at the same time.
Zinc	Assists in production of new immune cells, developing 'natural killer cells' which fight viruses, supporting communication between immune cells.	Sources include meat, shellfish, legumes, seeds (particularly pumpkin seeds), nuts, and dairy.
Selenium	Assists in production of new immune cells and regulates appropriate immune response.	Sources include brazil nuts, sunflower seeds, tuna, meat, poultry, shellfish, eggs, and wholegrains

LOOK AFTER YOUR GUT HEALTH

A healthy gut is essential for good immunity and general good wellbeing. If our gut health is compromised, the nutrients from food cannot be absorbed properly, which can in turn compromise how the body functions.

An easy way to boost gut health is by maintaining healthy and balanced gut bacteria (the microbiome). The gut microbiome can transform our food into nutrients, defend us against pathogens, and much more.

You have probably heard of prebiotics and probiotics, and it is important that we get both in the diet. To understand how prebiotics work, think of your gut as a garden and the bacteria as plants, prebiotics is like the fertiliser which helps the plants to flourish. Some prebiotic-rich foods include bananas, asparagus, garlic, onions and oats.

Probiotics are found in abundance in fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kefir, kimchi, and yoghurt. Aim to eat a source of these each day. This is a great way to maintain a healthy and diverse supply of gut bacteria, and support a healthy immune system.

'Friendly' gut bacteria also love a varied and fibre-rich diet that boosts the diversity of species. Low diversity (having only a few different types of bacteria) has been linked to chronic illness, so be sure to eat a variety of different plant foods daily (in line with the food pyramid on page 6).

*70% of the body's
immune system is
located in the gut so
we need to nurture
and nourish it for
optimal health and
wellbeing*

If you have any concerns with your gut health, make sure that you discuss this with your GP or nutritionist.



5 COLD AND FLU FIGHTING FOODS

If you are feeling a little under the weather, or you have people in the house who are poorly, and you want to really give yourself a boost, then the following foods are excellent to have on hand, and they can be added to your regular daily diet to use preventively too. These are:

- **Raw garlic** | Has antimicrobial and antioxidant properties. It can be added to salad dressings, hummus, pestos, etc.
- **Ginger** | Has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Can be added to curries, soups, oats, and smoothies. A daily ginger shot or a hot lemon and ginger drink are great to have throughout the cold and flu season.
- **Oregano** | Has antimicrobial properties and can be added to many Mediterranean-style dishes and salads.
- **Honey** | Provides antimicrobial properties and studies have shown that it can reduce the symptoms associated with colds and flu, but do use sparingly as the body still processes it like sugar.
- **Cinnamon** | Has been found to have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antiviral properties. Have it in teas, oats, curries, etc.

*"Let food be thy
medicine, and let
medicine be thy
food"*

Hippocrates



GINGER AND TURMERIC POWER SHOT

This fiery and energising health shot contains compounds that are anti-inflammatory and antioxidant, supporting detoxification and the immune system.

Have one in the morning with breakfast for a powerful nutritional boost. Turmeric is fat-soluble, meaning the body absorbs it when consumed with fat, so ensure that your breakfast includes a healthy fat such as avocado, nuts, seeds, eggs, or yoghurt.

This mixture will last 4-5 days in the refrigerator in an airtight container. Aim for around 50-60ml per shot once a day.

Ingredients

5 lemons
1/2 cup ginger (no need to peel)
1/4 cup water
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp turmeric
A pinch of black pepper

Method

Wash and chop the ginger into small chunks and juice the lemons.

Add all ingredients to a blender and blitz until smooth.

Pour the mix through a sieve and push through firmly with the back of a spoon to get the remaining juice out.



HEALTHY WINTER LIFESTYLE

Nutrition is just one essential area of health that needs to be considered to feel energised and well during the winter months, and it's certainly a fantastic starting point. However, in health, many aspects need to be aligned for us to feel our best. Some further lifestyle tips to feel your best this winter are:

- Getting daily movement (and making it non-negotiable). This could be your favourite type of workout, a good walk, or playing a sport. Ensure that every day you move in some way, this is so important for blood sugar balance, energy, mood, cardiovascular health and more.
- Get a good night's sleep (aiming for 7-9 hours a night). Balance your circadian rhythms by getting daylight outside (a 15-20 minute walk is ideal) preferably within the first hour of waking.
- Take steps to manage any mental and emotional stress which can really take its toll on your health if left to build up. Meditation, exercise, deep breathing, and journalling are all good ways to help calm the mind.
- Experiment with hot and cold exposure. There is plenty of emerging research on the benefits of saunas and cold showers on mood, immunity and cardiovascular health.
- Be sociable! We are naturally social beings. Some people need social connection more than others, but don't be tempted to hibernate just because it's winter. Have things to look forward to, join groups and catch up with friends.
- Conversely, it's equally as important to take the time to rest and relax. We are naturally designed to slow down a bit in winter as the reduced daylight hours make our bodies produce more melatonin (the sleep hormone) which can make us more tired than usual, so lean into this, as deep rest and recuperation are important.

YOUR HEALTHY WINTER PLANNER

Now that you know what to do, spend a few moments planning which healthy habits and tips you can incorporate into your daily and weekly routines so that you can enjoy a happy healthy winter. Print this off and pin it up where you can be reminded of this promise to yourself each day.

EAT MORE
OF...

EAT LESS
OF...

EXERCISE
PLAN

SAY YES
TO...

SAY NO
TO...



DO YOU NEED MORE BESPOKE NUTRITIONAL GUIDANCE?

If you think you would like more individual support with your health and wellness journey, specific to your personal goals or concerns, get in touch to book a call to see how a 1:1 nutrition consultation can help you eat well, live well and be your best.

Also if you loved this guide please do reach out and let me know what helped you and what positive changes you are going to make this winter.

GET IN TOUCH



@FRANCESCAGRACENUTRITION
WWW.FRANCESCALANCASTER.COM