

### STAYING POSITIVE THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

Before you know it, Thanksgiving and then Christmas will be upon us and many of us have mixed emotions about it. We are going through crazy times, but no matter the circumstances - it's important to focus on having a positive outlook. We need to remember – we can only control ourselves and our own attitude. So, try not to stress and keep things relatively simple and in perspective! Don't forget the big picture, and don't get stuck stressing over the small stuff. Here are a few quick tips.



- **Think about the TRUE meaning of the holidays!** What do the holidays mean to you, your family, and your loved ones.
- **Figure out a practical plan - in advance!** Instead of winging it, plan to see everybody you want to see and go to the places you want to go to. A plan makes things so much easier when everyone knows what to expect and you don't end up running around feeling annoyed, being disappointed and disappointing others. Where and who will you spend the various holidays with?
- **Fake it 'til you make it.** Perhaps this holiday season is a tough one for you but try to push through. Wake up, make up your mind on how you're going to act and feel; then get things done with a smile... even if you don't feel like it initially. This isn't to say you need to overload yourself (because you made a PLAN that is workable) but present yourself as a "Positive Polly" rather than a "Negative Nancy."
- **Handle your finances as wisely as possible.** Most of us worry about money at this time of year. Overspending can cause even more stress than needed in the short term and the long term – and remember, it's not all about expensive gifts. Creativity and meaning go a long, long way.
- **Focus on the Positives** – This may not be an automatic direction that your mind travels to but make a point to reflect each day on what you are thankful for and remember what the holidays are all about... love, kindness, and thanks.
- **Take care of yourself** – It is very easy to become overwhelmed over the holidays with so many things to think about and do in addition to your normal schedule. This is when our emotional health can take a hit, so carve out time for yourself to destress whether it's 10 minutes or 2 hours and do it regularly. This could include a workout or walk, yoga class, meditation, reading a good book, or meeting up with friends.
- **Adapt to change** – We all have certain traditions, but with the recent pandemic,



### Gluten-free Apple Berry Crumble

#### Ingredients:

- 2 large apples cut in half and center scooped out

#### Filling

- 2 cups fresh or frozen berries of your choice
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

#### Crumble Topping

- 1/3 cups gluten-free flour mix
- 1/4 cup gluten-free oats
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons butter, chilled and cut into cubes

#### Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Prepare a baking dish with non-stick spray or butter.
- Cut the two large apples in half and scoop the apple out. Be careful not to make the wall of the apple too thin since you will be filling it.
- Place the crumble topping mixture into a bowl and mix with a pastry blender or spoon.
- In a separate bowl, mix the filling ingredients together and fill the apple halves. Top with a generous amount of crumble and place into a baking dish.
- Bake the apples for 25-30 minutes until they are bubbly and browned. When they have cooled, top with a scoop of vanilla ice cream, sprinkle of cinnamon and serve.

Gluten-free guests will thank you and everyone else will love them too! 4 servings.

Recipe and photo: <https://twinstripe.com/gluten-free-apple-berry-crumble/>

carrying out those traditions often wasn't possible. This year is an improvement over last, but concerns remain. Though we often want to hang on to our old traditions, reflect on what changes work for you and your family and realize that new traditions are great for family bonding, too.

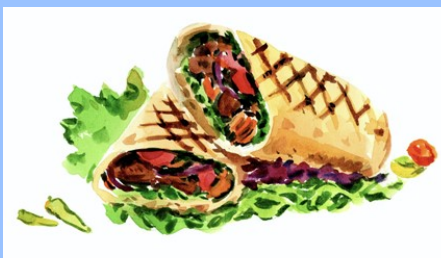
- **Accept help** – You are not alone if you struggle with anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues. Accept that it is OK to not feel OK and know that getting help is the right thing to do if you are struggling. If you don't know who to contact, start with your family physician's office and they can help steer you in the right direction.

## ANTI-INFLAMMATORY EATING TO COMBAT DISEASE

Inflammation has been shown to be a causative factor in many ailments and illnesses including cancer, heart disease, arthritis, and Alzheimer's. So, what can we do? For starters, we have control over what we put into our bodies and keeping a food journal can help. There are lots of apps, or simply jot down what you eat to keep track, so you are less likely to eat mindlessly. The following are some dietary anti-inflammation tips.

1. **Look at your carbs.** Most of your carbohydrates should be from UNPROCESSED and UNREFINED foods. Empty calories are a no-no. You can accomplish this by replacing snack foods (wheat flour, corn, and sugar) with vegetables, fruits, or whole grains. The worst things you can eat are processed foods.
2. **Minimize omega-6 fats** as they are PRO-inflammatory and include safflower, soybean, sunflower, corn, cottonseed mixed vegetable oils, and margarine. Look at labels and replace your cooking oil with cold pressed extra-virgin olive oil, avocado oil, or flaxseed oil as your main cooking oil. BE AWARE THAT RESTAURANTS (UNLESS THEY STATE IT ON THE MENU, OR YOU ASK) MOST LIKELY USE THE INFLAMMATORY OMEGA-6 OILS LISTED).
3. **Increase omega-3 intake.** When possible, try to get omega-3 fatty acids from foods. Fish high in DHA and EPA omega-3 fatty acids include anchovies, bluefish, herring, mackerel, wild salmon (wild has more omega-3 than farmed), sardines, sturgeon, lake trout, tuna. Many experts recommend eating these fish two to three times a week. Good food sources of ALA -- which is converted into omega-3 fatty acids in the body -- include: walnuts, flax, olive oil.
4. **Consider a daily fish oil supplement.** You may want to discuss this with your doctor, first, to make sure you are getting the benefits you need. Experts usually recommend 1 gram (1,000 milligrams) of DHA and EPA combined from fish oil daily. People with heart disease and other health conditions sometimes take doses of up to 4 grams a day -- but only under a doctor's supervision.
5. **Aim for nine servings of vegetables and fruits per day.** Aim for a range of colors and varieties and remember, one serving is about equal to one handful. A large salad with mixed dark greens, peppers, carrots, tomatoes, and cucumbers could be up to five servings! Include other vegetables such as cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, onions, and sweet potatoes as well as fresh and (additive-free) frozen fruits, including apples, apricots, bananas, berries, cantaloupe, grapes, kiwi fruit, oranges, papaya, pineapple, and avocados. Green smoothies with a few handfuls of spinach or kale and fruit are a good way to get extra fruit and vegetables. FYI -

### ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS



## Burger Gyros

### Gyro Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground meat (grass-fed beef, turkey, Impossible burger)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 Tbs. dried oregano
- ½ Tbs. dried thyme
- 1 Tbs. garlic powder or minced
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 4 pita breads for serving
- Tzatziki sauce for serving
- Fresh dill and/or parsley, chopped for serving
- Lemon wedges for serving

### Greek Salad Ingredients:

- 2 cups romaine lettuce, chopped
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup diced cucumbers
- 1/3 cup sliced pepperoncini or other sweet peppers
- 3 Tbs. sliced red onion
- 12 Kalamata olives, pitted, sliced in half
- 1/3 cup feta cheese
- 2 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbs. white or red wine vinegar
- ¾ tsp salt

### Directions:

**Greek Salad:** Combine lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, onion, olives in a medium bowl. In a small bowl, add olive oil, vinegar, and salt. Whisk together. Pour over salad and add feta. Toss & set aside.

**Gyros:** Place ground meat in medium bowl and season with salt, thyme, oregano, garlic. Mix & then divide into 8 oval-shaped patties. Grill on high heat and brush with oil. Cook patties until both sides are brown and inside is to your liking.

**Serve:** Warm pitas and assemble in gyros in layers.

1. Greek salad
2. 2 patties
3. 6 Kalamata olive halves
4. Tzatziki to taste
5. Dill/parsley to taste

Serve immediately with lemon wedge.

Serves 4.

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Fruit juice is not a good option.

6. **Eat more fiber.** Start slowly and build gradually to eat 40 grams of fiber a day - simple to do if you increase your consumption of fruit (especially berries), vegetables, and whole grains.
7. **Make sure your grains are WHOLE-GRAIN.** Go for sprouted grain breads and pastas (often found in the organic and frozen section of the grocery store).
8. **Learn to love ginger.** Find a ginger dressing to use on salads, sip ginger tea made from fresh ginger root, include in your smoothie, or use fresh ginger in stir-fry.
9. **Turmeric is a spice that can be extremely beneficial.** (It gives yellow mustard its color and is often used in curry), but most importantly, it's an anti-inflammatory spice. Turmeric tea, cold or hot, is a good place to start. You can also sprinkle it on vegetables, add it to rice and other dishes and even on popcorn. Note: turmeric is better absorbed if mixed with pepper.
10. **Organic green tea and water.** Green tea can be full of pesticides, so organic is a better bet.

<https://www.arthritis-health.com/treatment/diet-and-nutrition/what-are-anti-inflammatory-foods>  
<http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/omega-3-fatty-acids-fact-sheet?page=3>  
<http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/ART02012/anti-inflammatory-diet>

## EXERCISE FOR DIGESTIVE HEALTH

We are all familiar with having digestive issues from time to time, and they run the gamut from merely an annoyance to actually debilitating. Were you aware, however, that exercise can help you to attain and maintain healthy digestion? We know that being physically active is good for our hearts, lungs, muscles, and weight management, but there are many benefits for our digestive system as well!



**Move and groove** – Having irregular bathroom habits (diarrhea and/or constipation) can be a real issue, and whereas daily or twice a day bowel movements are considered pretty normal, going too often, or not often enough may have you looking to regulate yourself and get back on track. For those that have IBS, studies have found that exercise not only helped alleviate their symptoms, but also improved their overall quality of life – relieving symptoms such as fatigue, anxiety, and depression. (Note: gentle to moderate exercise helped, but vigorous exercise such as running sometimes led to an increase in gastric mobility – diarrhea.) Talk to your health care provider if you experience irregular bowel movements.

**Hunger Pangs** – We have a hunger hormone, and it is called ghrelin. It sends signals from our stomachs to our brains that it's time to eat. Following exercise, the amount of ghrelin often decreases, so taking a long walk or working out can help you to feel less hungry.

**The third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States is colon cancer.** Early detection and prevention are vitally important, and studies show that exercise aids in lowering the risk of developing it. In a 2019 study, they found that engaging in regular physical activity resulted in a 24% decrease in colon cancer risk and can prevent approximately 15% of colon cancers. This study also reported a decrease in the total number of intestinal polyps by 50%



### Caramelized Onion and Apple Grilled Cheese

#### Ingredients:

- 4 slices sourdough or country style bread
- Onion jam
- 4 slices prosciutto
- ½ apple (or pear), thinly sliced
- ¾ cup white cheddar, coarsely grated
- ½ cup gouda, coarsely grated
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ tablespoons fresh sage, roughly chopped

#### Directions:

1. Start with a slice of bread and top with a generous smear of onion jam, 2 slices of prosciutto, a few slices of apple (or pear), and half of the cheddar and gouda cheeses. Place another slice of bread on top and press down firmly.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Carefully transfer assembled grilled cheese onto the pan and cook until golden and cheese has melted, about 4-5 minutes.
3. Add ½ tablespoon of butter to the pan with a pinch of sage leaves. Let butter melt and swirl the pan so the grilled cheese can absorb the sage butter. Flip the sandwich over, cook until bread is golden, another 4-5 minutes, and repeat melting ½ tablespoon of butter in the pan with a pinch of sage leaves. Swirl the second side to absorb sage butter and remove grilled cheese from the pan.
4. Repeat with remaining ingredients for a second grilled cheese, then serve immediately.

Author: Misfits Market, Yield: 2

Photo and Recipe: <https://blog.misfitsmarket.com/2021/10/29/caramelized-onion-and-apple-grilled-cheese/print/5838/>

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and large polyps by 67%. Speak with your health care provider if you are genetically predisposed or if you have any questions. The following are a few great exercises for a healthier digestive tract. Of course, it is also important to take care of your gut by eating right (like the anti-inflammatory foods in the article above), managing stress, and refraining from smoking or drinking too much alcohol. Also, check with your health care provider to see if these exercises are right for you and your condition if you are not already regularly exercising.



**Yoga and stretching** help your body to relax and promote blood circulation. And as your gut can react to mental and physical stress with actual physical symptoms, these types of gentle exercises are beneficial to your gastrointestinal tract. Yoga builds strength and connects breath with movement. Several specific movements are very beneficial such as Child's Pose, Low Lunge.

**Tai chi** is like yoga in that it is a mind-body practice. It is gentle and improves strength, flexibility, balance, and body awareness. It can decrease stress, which may improve immunity and support gut function.

**Strength training** on 2 or more days a week that include work on all the major muscles i.e., legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, arms is beneficial.

**Walking** - long and steady wins the race. It's not about being a speed walker, it's more about endurance. So, walking a moderate pace (or slow if you are just beginning) is beneficial for you and your digestion!

**Breathing exercises** – Deep breathing is a technique that can be used daily – or when you're in discomfort. It involves inhaling to fully expand your belly (vs. your chest), then exhaling to contract your belly. You will want to do this in a rhythmic fashion. You can count: breathe in to a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, and breathe out slowly to a count of 6. There are many variations of counting, so do what works for you. Rhythmic breathing reduces stress and tension.

<https://atlasbiomed.com/blog/how-does-exercise-affect-gut-microbiome/>  
<https://www.everlywell.com/blog/colon-cancer/exercise-and-digestion/>  
<https://www.integrativenutrition.com/blog/four-exercises-to-support-your-gut-microbiome>

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**Questions / Support:**  
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## Skinny Cheesy Potatoes

### Ingredients

- 1 32-ounce bag hash brown potatoes, frozen shredded or diced, slightly thawed
- 3 cups riced cauliflower, frozen slightly thawed
- 1½ cups low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 cup low sodium chicken broth
- 1½ cup shredded Sharp Cheddar made with 2% milk ¾ cup reserved
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ c dried minced onion
- ½ tsp pepper
- 2 tsp Lawry's Seasoned Salt or your favorite all-purpose seasoning should work
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Cooking spray
- Salt & pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a large bowl add the hash browns, riced cauliflower, cottage cheese, 1 cup sharp cheddar, seasoned salt, pepper, eggs, Greek yogurt, and chicken broth. Mix VERY well.
3. Spray a 9x13 casserole dish well with cooking spray. Add cheesy potato mixture and spread evenly into the dish. Top with the remaining ¾ cup sharp cheddar cheese. Spray top of the casserole with some more cooking spray to prevent cheese from sticking. Cover tightly with aluminum foil.
4. Bake for 40 minutes covered. Remove aluminum foil, turn the oven up to 425, and let the cheese brown up for another 15-20 minutes.

### NOTES

SERVING SIZE: 1/2 HEAPING CUP (14 SERVINGS)

If you like your Cheesy Potatoes to be a lil' extra brown and crispy on top, go ahead and turn it to broil... *but make sure to watch it closely!* I wouldn't let it go much longer than 4-5 minutes at 500 degrees.

Recipe and Photo: <https://theskinnyishdish.com/skinny-cheesy-potatoes/>