

# HEALTHY ENSEMBLE

## IN THIS ISSUE: TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER WINTER

### How to not “catch it”

Everyone comes indoors when it gets cold, and germs spread like wild-fire!

- 1) **Cough and sneeze into your elbow** Try to keep distance from those who are sick. Remember - germs can fly about 6 feet!
- 2) **Hand-washing! Hand-washing! Hand-washing!** (hand sanitizer is a good substitute when a sink isn't handy! (carry some))
- 3) **Are you sleeping well, eating healthy, and managing your stress? All of these contribute greatly to strengthening your immune system!!!**



### Talk to your healthcare provider about whether it's right for you!

Some don't care for this vaccine, and that is totally up to you! But just know that the injectable vaccine is not made with a live virus so you cannot get the flu from the shot. You may protect an infant or elderly person from getting it, as well. Even so, you may be against it. It is your decision!! If you do come down with flu-like symptoms (**sudden onset of generally feeling unwell, fever, chills, muscle aches, cough, congestion, runny nose, headaches, and fatigue.**) - see a doctor. They may be able to treat your symptoms and prescribe an antiviral to speed up the illness. Students and staff: if you test positive, let the school nurse know, and please STAY HOME!!!!

**Pumpkin-Coconut  
Bisque  
From Bon Appétit  
via Epicurious**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 cups solid-pack pumpkin, canned
- 2 cups low-salt vegetable broth
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened coconut milk, divided
- Salt and pepper
- Pepitas, for garnish

**DIRECTIONS:**

- 1 Heat the oil in a heavy large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic. Sauté until golden, about 10 minutes.
- 2 Add the pumpkin, broth, sugar, allspice, and crushed red pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat. Cover and simmer until flavors blend, about 30 minutes.
- 3 Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender until smooth. Return the soup to the pot. Bring to a simmer, thinning with coconut milk to the desired consistency.
- 4 Ladle the soup into bowls. Sprinkle with the pepita seeds, drizzle with a teaspoon of coconut milk, and serve.

## **Healthy Comfort Food Exists :-)**

### **SUPER FOOD!!!!**

### **Pumpkin = health benefits galore!!!**

- **High in fiber and potassium**
- **Contains antioxidants which may help prevent cancer and heart disease, and improve your immune system**
- **Helps control weight and Diabetes**
- **May even be protective against asthma**
- **This delicious recipe serves 6 at just 202 calories per serving**



**Finding it difficult to exercise in the colder, darker, weather? Don't we all!!!!**

**It's so important to maintain a good exercise routine despite the gloomy winter challenges.**



**Some Tips:**

- \* **Get out there in the mornings, rather than waiting until after school or work! Great way to energize, and may be easier than waiting until the end of the day when weather's gotten you down.**
- \* **If you're a person who usually likes to workout in the great outdoors, this might be a good time of year to consider buying a 3-month membership at the local gym, just to get you through the impossible days!**
- \* **Perhaps embrace the snow and pick up hiking, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing. When in Rome?!?! Or.....in Rhode Island!!!!**
- \* **Perhaps a treadmill or stationary bike and a pair of hand weights could hang out in your family room for a few months?**
- \* **Get out for a brisk, mid-day, walk even if this is when you take your lunch break. Embrace the strongest sun on the colder days - a few UV rays and some movement are good for not only our bodies, but our minds!**

# A Word About Meditation!

In just 5 minutes, twice a day, a meditation practice can help to:

## HOW TO START MEDITATING

**BREATH**  
Don't try to "calm your mind." Instead, appreciate the sensations of your breath in the same way that a wine snob tastes a cabernet. When your mind starts wandering away into thoughts, just recognize that you're thinking. Then return to appreciating the sensations of your breath.

**EMOTIONS**  
Long-term meditators show increased size in brain regions associated with emotional regulation. "Larger volumes in these regions might account for meditators' singular abilities and habits to cultivate positive emotions, retain emotional stability, and engage in mindful behavior," according to a UCLA study.

**ARMS/HANDS**  
Relax your shoulders and arms, letting your hands rest on your thighs. Alternately, place one hand on another in your lap.

**EYES**  
Decide what you're going to do with your eyes. If you want the experience to be more body-based, close them. If you want to feel more anchored in the space you're in, keep them open.

**LEGS/FEET**  
If you're sitting in a chair, keep your feet flat on the floor and your spine straight. If you're sitting cross-legged on a cushion, the important thing is to have your knees below your hips. If you need a higher seat, make one.

**TIME**  
Meditation isn't about length; it's about frequency. In the same way you don't get strong by lifting one giant weight one time, you should try and sit regularly. Five or ten minutes a day is a great start.

Sources: "Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living" by Pema Chodron; "The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation" by Thich Nhat Hanh; "10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works—A True Story" by Dan Harris

**BUSINESS INSIDER**

- \* reduce stress
- \* control anxiety
- \* promote emotional health
- \* enhance self-awareness
- \* enhance attention span
- \* generate kindness
- \* reduce age-related memory loss
- \* fight addictions
- \* reduce pain
- \* improve sleep

**It costs nothing. You need no equipment. No memberships.**

**Open your mind to the possibilities!**

**There are several types so that you can do what's comfortable for YOU!**

**Consider looking up some styles. Can't hurt to try!**

**Ask a friend, doctor, teacher, for guidance! Or.....good ole' Google!**

# PET PAGE!!



**Lots of people think ticks and other parasites leave animals alone in winter!**

**NOPE!**

**Heart worm and Flea and tick prevention should be give every month of the year. Your pet knows this all too well. November happens to be a common time for ticks in RI! Create a reminder system for the first of each month so you don't forget the treatment that your vet has prescribed, even during Winter!**

**Last but not least, be careful of their paws if you walk them in icy conditions. Icy/snowy/salty surfaces can hurt your dog's paws. There are dog-specific balms that you can apply before and after a walk in these conditions and also use a warm, moist, washcloth to wash (then dry) the paws after the walks!**