

mxHealth

Sniffles, weight gain, lethargy and depression can all get us down around this time of year, but VANESSA SANTER explains how to beat the winter blues.

WINTER

Doonas, hot chocolate, red wine, pasta and flannelette PJ's – winter is traditionally a time to curl up and seek our comforts. But when bikini weather beckons we often have a layer of Eskimo fat to diet away.

Many of us confuse cold with the need to use food to warm up. But Bianca Monley, from nutrition website www.eatfitfood.com.au, says we don't actually need to eat more during winter.

"I think people tend to overeat. It's easy when the weather is cool, but we don't need to eat more when it's colder, just the right types of food. Fruit salads will just have you craving to eat more. Eating a breakfast like a hot porridge will keep you full throughout the day. And warm

winter casseroles made with lean meats and loads of veggies will keep you satisfied," she said.

Eating seasonally is also important. Monley said we need to take nature's lead despite almost every fruit and vegetable being available through the year. Look out for winter vegetables including baby carrots, leeks, pumpkin, Asian greens, beetroot, broccoli and silverbeet, and fruit such as apples, avocado and all the citrus fruits.

Gul McCarty, author of *Feelgood Food*, said piling up on starch was a recipe for weight gain. "People eat too much starch in

bread, pasta, rice and potatoes," she said.

"I'm not saying cut it out completely but we tend to eat more in winter time. Sitting down to a big bowl of pasta is not the best food you can eat. If you're going to eat a lot of starch, eat it early in the day for breakfast and eat it only for one meal of the day. Don't have a porridge breakfast, a sandwich for lunch and a pasta dinner. You will put on weight."

McCarty says the doona can also be a big trap, with many of us feeling more lethargic. "We don't want to exercise as much or get out of bed in winter and it's dark earlier so it's more fun to come home and sit in front of the TV or go out for drinks," she said.

But making time to exercise will not only warm you up, but ward off depression.

"Regular exercise will help keep the winter blues at bay," Monley said.

"It gets you in a better frame of mind being outdoors. If you're not into the gym, even a brisk walk three times a week will make a difference. Make the most of walking along the beach, walking or cycling to work or taking the stairs more – it's the little things."

It's also the little things that can do a lot of the damage – a hot chocolate here and there can be deceptive.

"Hot drinks can have a lot of calories in them. There's nothing like a coffee or hot chocolate in the morning, but a large

full-cream latte has 14 grams of fat and 1130 kilojoules. Choose a small size or skim milk, or even better have a black or green tea, which has antioxidants and low kilojoules," she said.

McCarty and Monley agree that fresh fruit and vegetables give your body the antioxidants it needs to fight off illness during flu season.

McCarty recommends eating a lot of garlic because it's an antiseptic and good for sore throats and boosting immunity.

And don't forget to drink eight glasses of water a day. Don't be deceived because you're not sweating. Staying hydrated is important because exposure to heating can dehydrate us, causing fatigue without realising.

COLD COMFORT

If you do succumb to a cold, load up on chicken soup, chilli, ginger, garlic, carrots, cabbage, broccoli, parsley, basil, onions, miso, lemons, oranges, thyme, cloves, cinnamon and raw honey, plus three litres of fluid (water, tea, soup).

WHAT TO AVOID:

Milk products, alcohol and sugar.

HOME HELP:

In a teapot or plunger, combine the juice of one lemon, the rind of half the lemon, half a stick of cinnamon, half a bunch of thyme, 3cm of fresh ginger root (grated) and raw honey to taste. Add boiling water and stand for five minutes. Drink 3-6 cups every day of the cold.



MAKE THIS WHEN YOU HAVE A COLD:

Mediterranean Salad

Serves: 4

Ingredients

6 tomatoes, diced
2 Lebanese cucumbers, sliced
½ Spanish onion, finely sliced
1 red capsicum, cut into strips
400g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
2 cups flat-leaf parsley leaves
8 anchovy fillets, chopped
16 kalamata olives
8 hard-boiled eggs, quartered
Dressing
1 tbs olive oil
1 tbs white wine vinegar

1 tbs lemon juice
Sea salt and pepper

Method

To make the dressing combine olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice and salt and pepper in a cup. Whisk well and set aside.

Place tomato, cucumber, onion, capsicum, chickpeas, parsley, anchovies and olives in a mixing bowl and toss with dressing. Divide salad between four

pasta bowls. Arrange eight egg quarters on top of each salad.

● Extract from *Feelgood Food*, by Mim Beim and Gul McCarty (RRP \$32.95, ABC Books)



Bianca Monley keeps in shape despite the rain.



SURVIVAL

GUIDE

DETOX DIARY

by VANESSA SANTER

I've never been one to go on fad diets and consider myself pretty healthy, but the Eat Fit Food 10-day detox didn't seem like a diet. It promises fresh gourmet meals aimed at people who feel their immune system is not up to scratch or feel like their bodies are sluggish and need a wake-up call.

DAY 1

I wake to find two small Eakies on my doorstep containing all the food I'll need for the next 48 hours. Before breakfast it's a glass of hot water with lemon to kick-start the digestive system and liver, and a raw veggie juice to get some serious vitamins in early. After home-style baked beans – kidney beans and chickpeas in a yummy tomato-and-onion sauce – I waddle out of the house. Miso soup full of tofu and seaweed seems a big mid-morning snack, but lunch is light – a spinach and lentil salad with beetroot dressing. By afternoon I'm feeling a little light-headed, probably because of the lack of carbs. I would have usually had toast, porridge and bread in sandwiches by now.

DAY 2

My digestive system is taking a while to get used to the increased fibre and nuts (you're given psyllium and ground linseed, sunflower seed and almond as supplements to take daily). I find the creamy rice milk I have on my rice muesli for breakfast is a good alternative to my usual soy milk.

DAY 3

By this afternoon I'm really craving sugar and carbs. I eat

my fruit and console myself that I usually get a headache at this time of the month, but have been surprisingly headache free. Dinner is really good – chilli, ginger and lemongrass barramundi with vegetables and I'm happy to find that carbs – brown rice – are on the menu.

DAY 4

Still craving sugar and carbs, but a delicious warm brown rice pudding with sweet poached pears and walnuts takes the edge off. Today the food is extra good. The roast pumpkin and caramelised onion frittata with side salad is delicious. So's the organic chicken stir-fry for dinner. It's still a challenge not to eat bread though.

DAY 5

Today is the best I've felt so far. The fruit salad for breakfast is full of so many fruits you can practically hear your body thanking you. The olive-encrusted salmon and silverbeet with new potatoes is a treat and doesn't feel in the least bit like a detox.

DAY 6

Feel good again today despite being bloated from all the water (2.5L a day) and fibre. I have heaps of energy though it's hard to resist a glass of wine when I'm out. I'm forced to have my first non-detox food at dinner with friends. I chose some skewered barbecue prawns on a bed of salad and hope I'm keeping with the detox. The spicy Thai omelet for lunch is delicious. It makes me notice how often I accidentally skip lunch or eat inadequately at the weekend.

DAY 7

The baked beans reappear on the menu and play havoc with my digestive system. I suffer from irritable bowel syndrome and ask the dietitian to revise the menu, taking out some of the nuts and seeds which seem to be disagreeing with me.

DAY 8

Finally, the cravings have stopped. Eating less nuts and seeds is proving better for me. I'm already noting how I can get more fresh produce into my diet when the detox ends. The warm tofu and veggie stir-fry with brown rice and cashews is a great winter lunch.

DAY 9

Not feeling like I'll need to leap into eating chocolate or drinking wine when the detox finishes. I'm clear headed and realise I haven't had that sluggish I-can't-be-bothered feeling for quite a few days now. I sleep pretty much as soon as my head hits the pillow – possibly because I haven't overburdened my system with a huge amount of carbs for dinner.

DAY 10

The light-headedness has come back a little today. This is probably an indication that I will need to get some red meat into me shortly, but I feel as though a diet such as this is sustainable long term. I plan to try to eat fish and chicken more often, opt for less bread, attempt to drink more fresh juices and eat more protein/vegetable combinations for dinner – minus white rice.

● The detox costs \$48 a day. Visit www.eatfitfood.com.au for more information.

