



Winter is coming...

Every year it happens; the weather gets cold and wet, and the days get shorter. Many of us go to work in the dark, and go home in the dark, and it gets harder to become motivated to do anything other than get cosy on the couch. This can then lead to feeling down.

If this sounds familiar, then you may suffer from what is called seasonal affective disorder (SAD). This is a mood disorder characterised by depression, fatigue and social withdrawal which occurs at the same time every year. SAD can occur at any time in the year; however it usually correlates to the changing of seasons, and more commonly through winter months. Don't brush off that yearly feeling as a case of the "winter blues" – put some steps in place to keep your mood and motivation steady throughout the year.



- ▶ The reduced level of sunlight in autumn and winter may cause winter-onset SAD. To prevent this, try getting outside as much as possible, particularly when the sun is out (between 10am and 2pm).
- ▶ Make sure you keep up your fruit and veg intake. Research shows we tend to eat more carbohydrate rich foods during winter, and we tend to eat too much. Foods high in vitamin D are also important, so include some salmon, eggs and mushrooms into your diet.
- ▶ Try not to go over the top with alcohol – long term it will disturb your sleep and make you feel worse.
- ▶ There are lots of relaxation exercises you can try – guided meditation (Smiling Mind app), yoga (check out YouTube for some free videos), try some breathing exercises or take a nice warm bath.
- ▶ Keep in touch with friends and family. Enlist someone's help in keeping you active and helping you get out of your shell during the cold months. If you are feeling SAD, talk to someone about how you're feeling – text a friend or jump online to the beyondblue website if you're not up to doing it person.
- ▶ Keep up your physical activity levels. This is usually the first thing to drop off when it gets cold outside, but getting your 30 minutes daily is even more important during the winter months. A 2019 JAMA Psychiatry study has provided the strongest evidence yet that exercise has a protective effect against depression. The study indicates that replacing sedentary behaviour with 15 minutes of vigorous activity daily can reduce depression risk by approximately 26%. The level of physical activity does not need to cause a physical benefit in order to promote a benefit to your mental health – anything is better than nothing!

Early intervention is always the best way to stop the progression of this disorder. However, if you notice that you feel down for days at a time, can't get motivated to do activities you normally enjoy, notice changes to sleeping patterns and appetite, turn to alcohol for comfort or relaxation, or are feeling hopeless, speak to your doctor.

Bowel Cancer Awareness month

Bowel cancer claims the lives of 103 Australians every week (5,375 people a year) - but it's one of the most treatable types of cancer if found early. Bowel Cancer Awareness month is aimed at raising awareness and funding for prevention, early diagnosis, research, quality treatment and the best care for everyone affected by bowel cancer – Australia's second deadliest cancer.

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While the risk of bowel cancer increases significantly with age, the disease doesn't discriminate, affecting men and women, young and old.

98% of bowel cancer cases can be treated successfully if detected early, however fewer than 50% of bowel cancers are found early. Early screening is important to stop the spread of this deadly cancer. Bowel Cancer Australia recommend screening from the age of 50, and getting checked every two years, however if you notice any of the following symptoms, or have a family history of bowel cancer, you should see your GP.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS:

- ▶ Blood in your bowel movement
- ▶ Unexplained weight loss
- ▶ Persistent change in your bowel habit
- ▶ Severe abdominal pain

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is eligible to people aged between 50 and 74 years to screen for bowel cancer. Participants are sent a free, easy to use test kit to complete at home. By 2020, all eligible Australians aged between 50 and 74 years of age will be invited to screen every two years (around four million Australians a year). This could save up to 500 lives annually, and significantly reduce the burden of bowel cancer on Australians and their families.

Cavolo nero (kale) and zucchini fritters with beetroot quickles

These fritters are an excellent light lunch or dinner. Plus the kale, a cruciferous vegetable, is jammed packed with nutrients. They freeze brilliantly and are easily reheated in a sandwich press. Delicious served alongside green salad and feta.

Prep: 15 mins | Cooking: 10 mins

Ingredients:

- ▶ 4 cavolo nero leaves, destalked
- ▶ 2 zucchinis
- ▶ 2 beetroots
- ▶ 2 eggs, beaten
- ▶ ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ▶ ⅓ cup wholemeal flour
- ▶ ½ cup picked mint leaves
- ▶ 3 garlic cloves
- ▶ 1 tsp salt
- ▶ Olive oil

Fritters

1. Coarsely grate zucchini. Place a clean muslin, tea towel or Chux in a bowl so that the cloth goes over the edges. Put zucchini in the centre of the bowl and sprinkle salt. Set aside for 5 minutes.
2. Finely chop cavolo nero and mint leaves. Combine in a separate bowl with flour and garlic.

3. Check if the salt has drawn moisture out of the zucchini. If it has, twist cloth into a ball and squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Add zucchini pulp to the cavolo nero and mint leaves mixture.
4. Add eggs and combine. If the mixture is too dry add a little of the zucchini juice.
5. Test fry a tablespoon of mixture in a pan with olive oil. If the fritter is too crumbly add extra flour.

Beetroot Quickles (Quick Pickles)

1. Peel and slice beetroot into a shape which will fit into your container of choice.
2. Put beetroot slices into a jar or other container with a well fitted lid. Cover in vinegar and refrigerate. They will last up to two weeks in the fridge.

Note - Cavolo nero is also known as black cabbage, dinosaur kale or Tuscan kale. You can replace the cavolo nero with any kale of your choice. If not using cavolo nero, make sure you massage the kale leaves with a little olive oil once chopped to break down the fibres.



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