



Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

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Hours of Operation:
Monday—Friday 8-5pm

DECEMBER 2025

Sponsorship

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All Sites individualize their newsletters to their local area information, activities calendars and games.

Health & Wellness

Combating the Winter Blues: Mental Health Tips for Seniors

Winter can be a challenging season, with shorter days, colder weather, and limited outdoor activities often leading to feelings of isolation or sadness. These feelings, commonly referred to as the “winter blues,” can affect anyone, but seniors are especially vulnerable. Here are practical tips to help you stay mentally and emotionally healthy during the winter months.

Brighten Your Environment

Creating a cheerful and well-lit space can do wonders for your mood and energy levels. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), often triggered by a lack of sunlight, can significantly impact seniors during winter. Here are a few ways to brighten your surroundings:

Maximize natural light: Open your curtains during the day and sit near windows to soak in sunlight.

Consider light therapy: If natural light is limited, a light therapy lamp can help boost your mood.

Decorate with the season in mind: Adding holiday or winter-themed decorations can make your space feel cozy and festive.

Stay Connected with Others

Social interaction is a powerful antidote to feelings of loneliness. Staying connected with family and friends can lift your spirits.

Join group activities: Participate in games, trivia nights, or craft workshops in your community.

Celebrate the holidays: Take part in holiday events like cookie decorating, caroling, or watching festive movies with others.

Keep in touch virtually: Use video calls to stay connected with loved ones who may be far away.

Keep Moving

Physical activity is a proven mood booster. Even gentle exercise can release endorphins, reduce stress, and improve your overall health.

Try chair exercises or yoga: These low-impact activities are great for maintaining flexibility and strength.

Walk indoors: If it's too cold to go outside, consider walking in hallways or designated indoor spaces.

Health & Wellness continued

Engage in seasonal activities: Participate in fun games like a snowball toss (using soft, plush balls) to keep things lively.

Focus on Eating Well

A nutritious diet is essential for both physical and mental health. Certain foods can help you feel more energetic and positive.

Choose hearty, nutrient-rich meals: Include soups, whole grains, and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon or walnuts.

Stay hydrated: Even in winter, it's important to drink plenty of water.

Enjoy seasonal treats: Treat yourself to healthy holiday-inspired snacks, such as spiced apple slices or cranberry dishes.

Take Care of Your Emotional Health

Winter can bring up difficult emotions, especially if you're reminiscing about past holidays or missing loved ones. Here are some ways to take care of your mental health:

Talk about your feelings: Share your thoughts with a trusted friend, family member, or caregiver.

Practice mindfulness: Try meditation or journaling to manage stress and stay focused on the present.

Seek support if needed: Don't hesitate to ask for help from counselors or therapists who can provide additional guidance.

Get Creative

Engaging in creative activities can be both fun and therapeutic. Express yourself through art, music, or writing.

Try an art project: Painting, drawing, or crafting holiday decorations can be relaxing and rewarding.

Enjoy music: Listen to your favorite holiday tunes or sing along with others.

Write your thoughts: Pen holiday cards, poems, or journal entries to capture your feelings and memories.

Find Joy in Small Moments

Sometimes, it's the little things that make a big difference. Focus on small, meaningful actions that bring you joy:

Treat yourself: Enjoy a hot cocoa or a favorite snack while watching a winter movie.

Health & Wellness continued

Share kindness: Write notes or small cards for others in your community to brighten their day.

Celebrate daily wins: Reflect on something positive each day, no matter how small.

Stay Connected with Family

Your family can be an important source of support during the winter months. Here's how to keep them involved:

Share updates: Let them know about events or activities you're participating in.

Ask for visits or calls: Schedule regular times to connect with loved ones.

Create keepsakes together: Work on photo albums or memory books during visits to reminisce and bond.

Embrace This Season with Happiness and Self-Care

Winter doesn't have to be a time of isolation or sadness. By staying active, connected, and engaged in meaningful activities, you can combat the winter blues and find joy in the season. Remember, small changes can have a big impact on your mental and emotional well-being. Embrace the season with warmth, connection, and positivity, and make this winter a time of happiness and self-care.

Nutrition

7 Essential Foods to Keep Seniors Healthy During Winter

As winter approaches and temperatures drop, seniors may experience several health issues like respiratory discomfort, flu, etc. due to temperature imbalance in their bodies triggered by the cold weather. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure seniors stay warm and comfortable during this time. A good diet is also essential to keep seniors healthy and deal with any potential hinders. Here are a few specific diet recommendations for seniors during winter.

Why Do Seniors Require Diet Changes in Winter?

Lack of tolerance for extreme heat or cold is an inevitable part of the aging process. This means the key components that regulate body temperatures, such as body fat percentage, muscle mass, skin, and sweat glands, change with age. Thus, these changes influence thermoregulation (thermal regulation), or how the body maintains its temperature balance. Poor thermoregulation can be related to a number of organ or system impairments as the body has to work harder. The only way to solve this issue is to follow a few safety tips for winter and eat the right foods in winter.

Nutrition continued

In addition, seniors often require diet changes in winter because their bodies may be more vulnerable to the flu and cold. Eating a nutrient-rich diet with foods high in vitamins and minerals can help strengthen the immune system. Additionally, seniors have a slow metabolic rate and for this reason, they may eat smaller portions. Hence, it is important to include nutrient-dense foods to ensure they are getting adequate nutrition.

What are the Best Foods for the Winter Season?

1. Lean protein and healthy fats

Seniors need lean protein and healthy fats in their winter diet for a variety of reasons. Healthy fats provide essential fatty acids and keep the immune system functioning at its optimal level. This is especially critical during the winter months when colds and the flu are more common. Eating lean protein and healthy fats can also help seniors maintain a healthy weight and can provide energy throughout the day.

Common sources of lean protein and healthy fats: skinless poultry, tofu, eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes, olive oil, avocados, fatty fish such as salmon and sardines, etc.

2. Iron-rich foods

Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) occurs when the lungs are not able to supply enough oxygen to the body's vital organs. In winter, health conditions like ARDS are more common among seniors. Related conditions like pneumonia, the flu, or chest injuries can also increase the risk of inflammation in the lungs.

Iron is an invaluable nutrient that helps to increase the production of red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout the body. Therefore, it can significantly reduce the risk of these health conditions in winter.

Common sources of iron: broccoli, dark chocolate, turkey or chicken, legumes, liver and other organ meats, pumpkin seeds, shellfish and fish, tofu, quinoa, etc.

3. Vitamin C-rich foods

During winter, older adults are more susceptible to infection. In this season, poor temperature control or conditions like gastrointestinal infection can especially increase the risk of other related health concerns. Vitamin C and antioxidant-rich foods are healthy additions to winter diets to keep colds and flu at bay. These fruits are effective at reducing inflammation in the body and fight infections and viruses by strengthening immunity.

Besides, oranges, grapefruit, pineapple, and several other citrus fruits are in season during the winter months. Therefore, they are fresher, naturally ripe, and available at the best prices.

Nutrition continued

Common sources of vitamin C: cabbage, lemon, lime, grapefruit, kiwi, orange, pineapple, kale, potato, sweet potato, yams, etc.

4. Root vegetables

Winter is the peak season for root vegetables, and they are known to be some of the most nutrient-rich vegetables with numerous health benefits. Root vegetables are high in vitamins A, B, and C as well as iron. Additionally, they are high in fiber and slow-burning carbohydrates, making them a nutritious addition to the winter diet to restore energy.

Besides, root vegetables are hearty and store well at cold temperatures, making them a convenient and dependable food source during the winter months. They are also versatile and bring exceptional flavors and colors to the palate.

Common root vegetables: carrot, potato, turnip, beet, parsnip, sweet potato, etc.

5. Vitamin D & calcium-rich foods

Adequate intake of calcium is essential to strengthening bones and muscles to avoid bone loss, risk of falls, and weakened immunity in seniors. In addition, vitamin D is also required for the absorption of calcium in the body. Winter means decreased exposure to sunlight which is the main source of vitamin D. Seniors need to have more vitamin D and calcium-rich foods in winter because they are more likely to suffer from a lack of vitamin D in winter.

Common sources of calcium and vitamin D: milk, cheese, yogurt, tofu, sardines, salmon, almonds, sunflower seeds, soybeans, leafy greens like broccoli, kale, spinach, mustard greens, etc.

6. Seasonal spices

Adding seasonal spices to food in the winter has many health benefits for seniors. Warming spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and cloves can improve digestion, reduce inflammation, and boost immunity. These spices also contain antioxidants that can help protect against colds and other illnesses. Additionally, they can add flavor and variety to a winter diet, making food more enjoyable.

Furthermore, having spicy foods can also help in winter because they contain compounds like capsaicin that can help increase blood circulation which can help to keep the body warm.

Spices to have in winter: ginger, garlic, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, turmeric, nutmeg, etc.

Nutrition continued

7. Soups

Having soups in the winter can help seniors stay warm and hydrated. It is easy to incorporate multiple nutrient-rich ingredients into soups and thus, they can be a rich source of essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that can help seniors stay healthy. Besides, soups are generally easier to digest than other foods, which can be beneficial for seniors who may have digestive issues during winter.

Common nutrient-rich soups: creamy mushroom soup, carrot and ginger soup, potato and leek soup, butternut squash soup, split pea soup, chicken and rice soup, tomato soup, vegetable beef soup, etc.

Key Takeaway

It's essential for you to make sure you are consuming these seven essential foods during the winter season to stay healthy and strong during the cold months. In addition, you should avoid processed and sugary foods and beverages. Also, you should drink adequate water to stay hydrated and get enough rest to allow your bodies to fight off any illnesses or viruses this winter season. Always consult a dietitian before opting for a new diet plan and inform them about any allergies or digestion issues you may have.

Staying Active

How to Stay Active During Winter Months

Winter can be a challenging season, especially for seniors who may already struggle with mobility, joint pain, and a general decline in energy levels. However, staying active during the colder months is crucial for maintaining physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life. Engaging in regular activities can help you stay fit, boost your immune system, and reduce the risk of seasonal depression. In this guide, we'll explore effective ways to stay active, healthy, and happy during the winter season.

1. Embrace Indoor Exercise Routines

When outdoor conditions become icy or too cold, indoor exercises are a fantastic alternative. You can keep fit without having to brave the harsh winter weather. Here are some activities that can be done indoors:

Chair Yoga: This gentle form of yoga improves flexibility, balance, and strength. It's perfect for seniors who may have difficulty standing or prefer exercising while seated.

Staying Active continued

Stretching and Flexibility Exercises: Simple stretches can increase blood flow, ease joint stiffness, and enhance mobility. Stretching daily is a great way to stay limber, especially during the colder months when joints may feel stiffer.

Walking Indoors: Whether it's walking around the house, using a treadmill, or heading to a local shopping mall, walking is an effective way to get the heart pumping without stepping into the cold. Walk inside daily to keep your legs strong and active.

Home Cardio Workouts: Low-impact cardio exercises, such as marching in place, step aerobics, or dancing to your favorite music, can keep the heart healthy while also being fun and energizing.

2. Leverage Technology for Fitness

With the rise of fitness apps and online platforms, you can access a wide range of exercise classes right from the comfort of your homes. Here are a few tech-friendly options:

Online Fitness Classes: Platforms like YouTube, SilverSneakers, and Zoom offer senior-friendly fitness routines that include everything from Tai Chi to Pilates.

Virtual Dance Classes: Dancing is not only a great form of exercise but also a mood booster. You can participate in online dance classes tailored to your fitness levels.

Fitness Apps: Apps like "FitOn" and "Sworkit" have beginner-friendly programs that you can easily follow. These apps offer guided exercises that are both safe and effective for older adults.

3. Encourage Group Activities (While Practicing Safety)

Social interaction is vital for mental health, especially for seniors who may experience feelings of loneliness during the winter months. Engaging in group activities can motivate you to stay active while also creating opportunities to connect with others.

Indoor Sports: Bowling, indoor golf, or even table tennis can be great ways for you to remain active while socializing.

Community Centers and Senior Clubs: Many senior centers offer exercise classes, crafting workshops, or social gatherings that can help you stay engaged and connected during winter.

Group Walks in Malls: For seniors who prefer walking, heading to a nearby mall can be a great way to walk in a safe and controlled environment. It's an opportunity to get some exercise while enjoying window shopping or chatting with friends.



Staying Active continued

4. Use Outdoor Activities Wisely

Although winter can be cold, spending time outdoors can still be beneficial as long as it's done safely. Fresh air and natural light can enhance mood and provide a sense of well-being. Here's how seniors can stay active outdoors:

Winter Walks: Walking in a local park or neighborhood can be invigorating on milder winter days. Ensure you dress warmly with proper shoes to prevent slips on icy surfaces.

Bird Watching: For seniors who love nature, bird watching in the backyard or park is a peaceful way to stay active without strenuous physical effort.

Light Gardening: While full-scale gardening may not be feasible in winter, you can tend to indoor plants or set up a small herb garden in pots near a sunny window. This can help maintain dexterity and provide a relaxing hobby.

5. Promote Mental Well-Being

Staying active is not only about physical health but also about mental wellness. The shorter days and colder temperatures can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Here are a few ways to support your mental well-being:

Mindful Meditation: Mindfulness and meditation can help reduce stress and anxiety and improve mood. Guided meditation sessions are readily available online.

Arts and Crafts: Explore hobbies like painting, knitting, or crafting. These activities can be both relaxing and creatively stimulating.

Reading and Puzzles: Engaging in mentally stimulating activities like reading, solving crossword puzzles, or playing card games can keep the mind sharp and reduce feelings of boredom.

Wrapping Up

Staying active during winter is essential for your overall health and happiness. By combining indoor exercises, tech-savvy fitness solutions, outdoor activities, and a focus on nutrition and mental well-being, you can ensure that your life remains vibrant and healthy even during the coldest months. Stay active, embrace new hobbies, and maintain social connections so they can make the most of the winter season.

Whether it's taking up a new indoor exercise routine or simply enjoying a cup of warm tea while reading a good book, there are countless ways to stay engaged and active. Enjoy a healthier, happier winter season.





Volunteer

🎄 ✨ Happy Holidays from the Volunteer Program! ✨ 🎄

As we celebrate this holiday season, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our volunteers who give their time, energy, and compassion throughout the year. Your dedication makes a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve, and we couldn't do it without you.

We are also excited to announce the **re-establishment of the Volunteer Advisory Council!** This council will serve as a voice for volunteers, helping to shape program improvements, share ideas, and strengthen the connection between staff and participants.

Mark Your Calendar: The first meeting of the Volunteer Advisory Council will take place at the **Bernalillo Senior Center on Tuesday, January 13, 2026.** We'll begin with **lunch at noon**, followed by the **council meeting immediately after.**

We are currently **seeking volunteers to join the council.** If you are passionate about making an impact, sharing your perspective, and helping guide the future of our program, we encourage you to participate.

Together, we can continue building a strong, supportive community — and what better time than the holidays to recommit to service and collaboration.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mike Adams

Frances Chavez

Thomas Ball

Margie Cordova

Rosa Crimarco

Susan Chavez

Charles Evans

Linda Crowden

Rosanne Eakin

Cynthia Lewis

Ernestine Paiz

Cynthia Risner

Randall Sacharczuk

Viji Sudarsanam

Food And Cooking > Recipes

Crock-Pot Candy

Let a slow cooker do all the work.

BY [ERIN MERHAR](#) Updated: Dec 8, 2023

YIELDS:

3 - 4 dz.

PREP TIME:

5 mins

TOTAL TIME:

1 hr 15 mins

Ingredients

- ☐ 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, diced
- ☐ 16 oz. almond bark
- ☐ 12 oz. bag semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ☐ 10 oz. dark chocolate chips
- ☐ 10 oz. peanut butter chips
- ☐ 3 cups salted, roasted peanuts
- ☐ 1 1/2 cups lightly crushed, ridged potato chips
- ☐ 1 1/2 cups crushed pretzel twists or skinny sticks
- ☐ 1 cup red and green coated candies, such as M&Ms, optional
- ☐ 1/4 cup sprinkles (optional)

[See Nutritional Information](#) ▾

Keep screen awake

Directions

- 1 | Place the butter in the base of a slow cooker.
- 2 | Chop the almond bark into pieces about the size of the chocolate chips.
- 3 | Add the almond bark, semi-sweet, dark, and peanut butter chips to the slow cooker. Cover with a lid and cook on high for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and stir to combine. Reduce the heat to low and cook for another 10 to 20 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes, until all of the chips are melted. Reduce the slow cooker temperature to hold warm. Gently stir in the peanuts, potato chips, and pretzels.
- 4 | Line 3 sheet trays with parchment paper. Using a spoon, drop mounded scoops (about 1 1/2 tablespoons each) onto the sheet trays, about 1 inch apart (the candies will spread and settle a little once dropped). Gently press 3 to 5 coated candies into the top of each piece of candy and sprinkle with sprinkles, if desired.
- 5 | Let rest at room temperature until firm, 30 to 45 minutes.
- 6 | Store in a single layer, between sheets of parchment paper, in the refrigerator, for up to 1 week.

Search...

Winter wonderland

L T Z R H O T C H O C O L A T E W M A O K N Q Q
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hot chocolate	ice fishing	jack frost	ice skates	snowstorm	snowflake
hibernate	fireplace	christmas	Avalanche	vacation	snowball
slippery	holidays	earmuffs	December	blizzard	sweater
snowman	mittens	migrate	kwanzaa	icicles	chimney
Blanket	sleigh	skiing	shovel	jacket	heater
gloves	freeze	slush	sleet	scarf	quilt
igloo	hocky	sled	melt	hail	cold
coat					

Food And Cooking > Recipes

Christmas Tortilla Rollups

BY REE DRUMMOND Updated: Feb 21, 2024

YIELDS:
8 serving(s)

PREP TIME:
15 mins

TOTAL TIME:
15 mins

Ingredients

- ☐ 2 packages (8 Oz. Size) Cream Cheese, Softened
- ☐ 1 package (1 Oz. Size) Dry Ranch Dressing Mix
- ☐ 1/2 tsp. Black Pepper
- ☐ 5 whole Burrito-sized Flour Tortillas
- ☐ 1 whole Red Bell Pepper, Seeded And Diced Finely
- ☐ 1 whole Green Bell Pepper, Seeded And Diced Finely
- ☐ 5 whole Green Onions, Sliced Thin

[See Nutritional Information](#) 

Keep screen
awake

Directions

In a bowl, mix the cream cheese, 1/2 to 3/4 of the packet of ranch dressing mix (add the rest to taste), and black pepper with a wooden spoon until totally combined. Divide equally among the tortillas and spread into a single layer all over the surface of each tortilla.

Sprinkle on the red and green bell pepper, as well as the green onion. Roll them up nice and tight, then wrap them individually in plastic wrap. Store in the fridge for at least 1 hour or up to 8 hours.

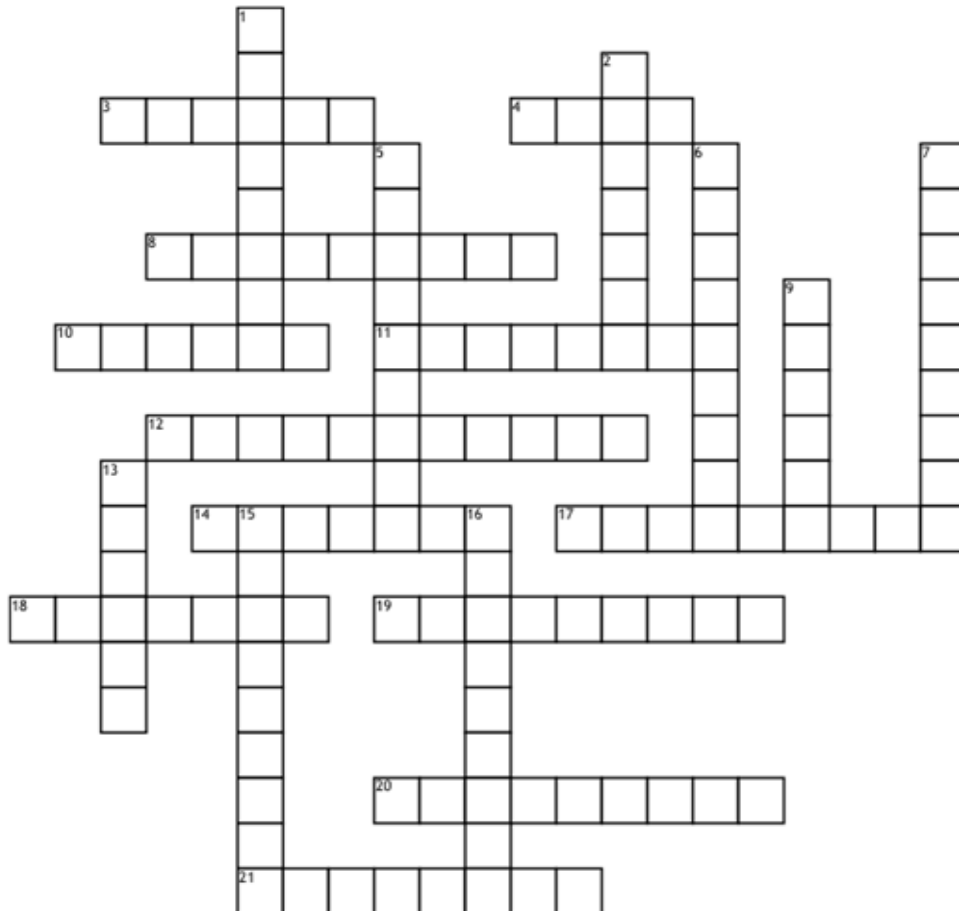
Before serving, slice into 1/2 to 3/4 inch slices and serve on a platter.

Options: Add shaved turkey, prosciutto, ham, or any meat.

Add fresh herbs if you have them.

Name: _____ Date: _____

WINTER WONDERLAND



Across

3. RIDE DOWN
 4. SCENT
 8. FUN WITH THE
 ONE YOU LOVE
 10. WARM
 11. UNSTABLE
 12. DIGITAL
 14. BURL IVES
 17. INACTIVITY

18. STARTS WITH
 HOLIDAY

19. RELAXING
 AMBIANCE

20. DESIGN

21. GAMES

Down

1. CAN'T SEE

2. TO KEEP WARM

5. WE ALL DREAD

6. WHITE AND RED

7. NO 2 ARE THE
SAME

9. ELSA AND ANNA

13. TASTES GREAT
WITH AMARETTO

15. CYCLONE

16. NORTHERN
HEMISPHERE