Winter Foods for Children

With the temperature drop and less daylight hours, many people have less energy and feel more depressed this time of year. Some common signs of this are changes in appetite, energy, sleep, and focus. Here are foods that will help your family stay healthy and happy this winter.

**Clementines:** Clementines are packed with Vitamin C, fiber, calcium, potassium, and phosphorus. They are great for strong bones and muscles and children love that they are seedless, easy to peel, and fun to eat. They are also rich in magnesium which is shown to manage symptoms of depression.

**Winter Squash:** Squash is full of Vitamin A, carotenoids, and fiber-great for heart health, immunity, and healthy skin. Fiber can also help keep blood sugar stable. Most squash is naturally sweet which children love. Try roasting butternut squash with cinnamon and maple syrup, stuffing acorn squash with meat and rice, or serving spaghetti squash with marinara sauce.

**Sweet Potatoes:** Sweet potatoes are a great source of fiber, Vitamin A, and potassium and their sweet taste can work in many recipes. Sweet potato puree can be added to mac and cheese, oatmeal, and brownies. Baked sweet potato sticks can be a great alternative to original French fries.

**Cauliflower:** This vegetable is rich in vitamins A, C and K, and many B-vitamins, plus potassium, magnesium and manganese which are important for growth and development. It is also rich in fiber promoting stable energy levels. If your child doesn’t like to try new vegetables, try making cauliflower “rice” in a food processor or add cauliflower puree to mashed potatoes.

**Nuts and Seeds:** Peanuts, almonds, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds are all rich in tryptophan which is needed to make serotonin, a mood regulator. They are also rich in omega-3s which have been shown to manage depression. Try adding these nuts and seeds to granola, granola bars, cookies, cereals, and trail mix.
National Pear Month: Pocket Pear Pie

4 whole grain flour tortillas (8 inch)
2 medium pears (or apples)
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon (ground)
6 teaspoons brown sugar, packed
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg (ground)
2 tablespoons milk (fat-free)

1. Warm tortillas in microwave or oven to make them easier to handle.
2. Peel and chop pear into pieces.
3. Place 1/4 of the fruit on half of each tortilla.
4. In a small bowl, stir together brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Sprinkle over fruit.
5. Roll up the tortillas, starting at the end with the fruit.
6. Place on an un-greased baking sheet and make small slashes to allow steam to escape. Brush with milk and sprinkle with sugar, if desired.
7. Back at 350 degrees in oven for 8-12 minutes or until lightly brown.
8. Serve warm or cool.

No matter what holiday your family celebrates- December is a busy month full of holiday parties and family gatherings. Physical activity isn’t the first thing on our mind this time of the year, but here are some fun ways to keep your kids off the couch.

- Spend the day skiing, sledding, or snowboarding.
- Spend your evening at an ice skating rink.
- Go out for an evening of caroling to spread holiday cheer and keep yourself moving.
- Get out on the dance floor at the holiday parties.
- Make a snowman, make snow angels, and have a snow ball fight.

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