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Winter 2012 Volume 2

...serving up a healthy dose of information

### A Tea to Ward off the Cold (and flu)

As the cold winter sets in, it's nice to have a little help staying warm. This tea will not only warm you up, but it will boost your immune system to help you fight off the winter cold and flu. Many of the ingredients help your digestive system, which can become sluggish after the excess of the holidays. Good for both prevention and treatment, this tea tastes and smells delightful, and infuses your home with its enticing aromas.

#### Winter Chai (2 Servings)

Note: many of these ingredients can be found in the bulk section of your local grocery store.

Allspice, berries (whole)	6 berries
Black peppercorns	8
Cardamom seed, crushed	2 Tbsp
Cinnamon stick, crushed	3 (Note: <i>ground</i> cinnamon will become slimy in your tea)
Cloves, whole	6
Fennel seed	1 Tbsp
Ginger, crystallized	2 Tbsp
Nutmeg	1 nut, crushed
Water	5 cups
Black tea	2 bags
Honey	To taste
Milk (or non-diary Alternative)	To taste

Add all ingredients but the black tea, milk and honey in a saucepan on your stovetop. Bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer, covered for 20 minutes.

Bring to a boil again, remove from heat and add black tea. Steep for 3-5 minutes. Strain into cup, add honey and milk to taste, and enjoy!

The tea ingredients can then be placed back into the saucepan with more water and simmered to fill your home with its incredible aroma.

The allspice, cardamom, clove, ginger, nutmeg, peppercorns, and nutmeg will warm you up and boost your immune system. The black tea is antiviral. The fennel, pepper, clove, and allspice are used traditionally as digestive aids.

For more information on the medicinal properties of this tea please visit: <http://www.interactivehealthclinic.com/chai>

**Dr. Susan H. Mueller, Lynnwood, WA**

Our own Dr. Mueller will be presenting a 3-part series on health in conjunction with **The Sweatbox**

**Sunday, March 11th- Eating for Beginners**  
**Sunday, April 29th- A Good Night's Sleep- Is it Possible?**  
**Sunday, May 20th- Detoxification- Why and How?**

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### Weight Loss Tips

Your new year's resolution was to lose weight? A *healthy* weight is important to prevent high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, pain, depression, and more.

So how do we lose it? Most believe that they need to eat less and exercise more, they should count and restrict calories, and eat less fatty foods. Have you tried these? Often I find that these don't work for my patients or they only work for a very short term and then they simply gain the weight back.

#### Tips to weight loss:

- ✔ Exercise is crucial in supporting weight loss, even a simple thirty minute walk per day can go a long way.
- ✔ Eat small frequent meals. I find that eating small meals (protein + vegetables) frequently reduces the urge to have large hunger bouts.
- ✔ It is also essential to eat and NEVER skip meals. This puts a huge stress on your body that causes it to retain the pounds rather than get rid of them. The body goes into survival mode when you starve it and holds onto to weight.
- ✔ Drink water, only water. Many sugar loaded drinks provide empty calories that don't fill you up and have a fat generating sweetener called high fructose corn syrup.
- ✔ Forget about the diet products — people ultimately have greater hunger cravings with these, and ironically *gain* more weight. These products' chemicals alter your brain chemistry and can cause you to eat *more*.
- ✔ Prevent dehydration. More than likely you are dehydrated. The body has a hard time distinguishing between being hungry or dehydrated. I recommend drinking 1-2 eight ounce glasses of filtered water before each substantial meal.
- ✔ Subdue Stress. As mentioned above you body is designed to protect itself and retains weight for reserves. But did you know that there are hormones that your body pumps out to increase blood fats, sugar and insulin? This alone can cause large amount of weight gain if stress remains for an extended period of time.
- ✔ Love your liver and kidneys. These are huge detoxifying organs. The liver has to be functioning properly to metabolize sugars and fats. The kidney also has to deal with getting all these things out of your body. Toxins from within our bodies and toxins from our environment both contribute to obesity.
- ✔ Finally I will add that hormones must be balanced. Work with your Naturopathic Doctor to balance ALL your hormones. Often the focus is largely on the thyroid and we miss treating the adrenals, ovaries, testes, pituitary, hypothalamus and the pineal gland. These all work together and if only one is supported then the others are likely falling behind and being over-worked.

Let's get your body back to thriving and take the steps to building a natural path to lifelong health!

**Dr. Brenden Cochran, Lynnwood, WA**



**If you're singing the winter blues...**

Winter in Alaska is wondrous thing, a bittersweet mingling of small comforts and the hardships that allow you to appreciate them. But for some Alaskans, the bitterness of winter brings depression. As the warmth goes out of the sunlight and the days get shorter & shorter, some folks tire easily and find it difficult to maintain a regular schedule. They sleep more but wake feeling unrested. Some become withdrawn and irritable. Others crave carbohydrates.

Up to 14 million people in the U.S. alone suffer from winter depression, which experts term Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Nearly 25 million Americans suffer from the "winter blues," a condition not as serious as SAD but still requiring attention.

The theories surrounding SAD focus on the absence of sunlight during the winter months, causing hormonal imbalances in the body. An increase in the pineal secretion of the sleep hormone, melatonin, and a drop in the activity of the hormone that elevates your mood, serotonin, have both been observed in patients with SAD, though it is not known precisely which pathways are affected in the brain or how these changes contribute to the onset or symptomology of SAD.

The signs and symptoms of SAD are very similar to clinical depression, with the most frequent symptoms being hypersomnia (oversleeping) and polyphagia (overeating). Other symptoms include:

- Difficulty concentrating and processing information
- Tension and inability to tolerate stress
- Fatigue and decreased physical activity
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-reproach, or inappropriate guilt
- Spontaneous remission of symptoms with the onset of Spring

Clinical trials have demonstrated several natural treatments that are effective at improving SAD, including:

- Light Therapy
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
- 5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) supplementation
- Pyridoxine (Vitamin B<sub>6</sub>) supplementation
- Cholecalciferol (Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>) supplementation

Light therapy is the practice of using full-spectrum light to affect the melatonin-serotonin system and alleviate the symptoms of the winter blues. Light therapy is the gold standard for treating SAD; studies have repeatedly demonstrated that light therapy works to relieve the symptoms of SAD better than antidepressant drugs. Light therapy might be as simple as getting up and walking outside on a bright winter morning. Dawn simulation is a type of light therapy that can be easily implemented into your routine by using a dawn-simulating alarm clock, which has a special built-in light that gradually increases in intensity to simulate a natural sunrise. Dawn/Dusk simulator light boxes are widely sold over the Internet. When buying one, choose a box that is at least 1 foot by 1.5 feet. These larger boxes have more research behind them.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy is a type of talk therapy in which the therapist and the client work together as a team to overcome the client's symptoms by changing their thinking, behavior, and emotional responses. 5-HTP is the direct precursor to serotonin production in the brain, and vitamin B<sub>6</sub> is a cofactor required for this conversion. Other cofactors necessary for the production of serotonin include vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, vitamin B<sub>3</sub>, vitamin B<sub>9</sub>, vitamin C, zinc, iron, calcium, and magnesium; though it should be noted that no studies have been conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of supplementation of these nutrients in the treatment of SAD. Interestingly, vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, which requires sun exposure to be produced in your body, is also linked to higher levels of serotonin, and it has been suggested that getting plenty of sunlight over the summer helps your body to maintain higher vitamin D levels in the winter, and therefore higher levels of serotonin as well.

There are numerous clinical trials to support the use of natural therapies to mitigate clinical depression and boost your mood no matter what season you find yourself in. These include:

- Regular physical activity
- St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), a botanical medicine
- Omega-3 Fatty Acid supplementation
- Chromium supplementation
- Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> supplementation
- Tyrosine supplementation
- Phenylalanine supplementation

As with all medical advice given in this column, natural or pharmaceutical, consult your doctor for specific recommendations and dosages.

**Dr. Brian Orr, Seward, AK**

This copy of **the Vital Scoop** provided to you by:




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For more information on Seasonal Affective Disorder, please look to the following resources: *Fight the Winter Blues. Don't be SAD* by Celeste Peters; *Winter Blues* by Norman Rosenthal, MD; and the National Organization for Seasonal Affective Disorder's website [www.nosad.org](http://www.nosad.org).

Dr. Brian Orr is the owner and provider of care at **Country Doc: Integrative Medical Specialty**. He is a licensed Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine – a primary care doctor who specializes in natural therapeutics. Please call 224-8680 to schedule an appointment. Country Doc shares an office with **Progressive Chiropractic**, which is located across from Spenard Builders Supply.

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