



## Ottawa Integrative Health Centre Inc.

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# Helping You Achieve Health . . . Naturally!

November 2022



### **How to Enjoy a Healthy Holiday Season**

By: Cathy Cochrane  
Holistic Nutritionist

It's mid-November and this longed-for thing of having life get back to normal is more tiring than you remember. And then there are the upcoming holidays to make things just a tad more hectic.

What ever happened to that erstwhile promise to be organized earlier? Do you really want to get back to the excessive consumerism and social obligations? There's the cooking and shopping and planning now that we can gather properly *en famille*. There'll be food from your naughty list on offer everywhere you turn. Maybe you worry you won't remember how to get it all done, so you run too fast, stay up too late, say yes to

more events and volunteering than you're comfortable with.

### **How can you enjoy the upcoming time of year without burning yourself out? How can you maintain the spirit of the season without compromising your own spirit?**

If you're anything like me, a certain amount of what you do at this time of year comes from outside expectations – more so now that the free-pass to bow out has gone away – your husband and kids' needs, what your sister-in-law or your mother or your co-workers expect of you. When you lose sight of all reason in favour of trying to do it all, you end up losing sight of yourself in the process.

The other morning, I headed out the door for an early appointment, into the soundless dark of a late fall morning. The coloured lights

on a neighbour's house reminded me of the onslaught of next month, and I felt that panic welling in me. There was something about the peace of the day, however, that drew my attention more strongly.

It was one of those mornings when dim light and cloud cover seem to negate every sound. All I heard was my breathe, so I settled into it, the way it shifted and vibrated with my steps. The sun was just coming up behind the clouds, sending the bare trees into dramatic relief against the lightening sky. No birds sang nor squirrels chattered – they were still huddled in their cozy nests. I heard a voice inside me say, "Enjoy the quiet. Enjoy the absolute peace."

To use traditional Chinese terminology, this is a *yin* season – we're creeping towards the most *yin* day of the year on December 21st – inward moving, cold, dark, moist, introspective, and receiving. Your instinct is to follow that energy – the desire to curl up under a blanket with a book, have more nights in with your family, make pots of soup – that's you putting *yin* into action.

The honouring of light in this season's holidays are a promise of the return to more *yang* – outward, hot, light, expansive and giving. A natural celebration of those qualities we so love, they help us connect to the world around us. Traditionally, these gatherings would have been a means of survival as people shared limited resources for food and heat for the winter. Yet, as we North Americans love to do everything to excess, the holidays are over the top, to the point of frenzy.

*For more information or to make an appointment please call:*

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The stress of this season comes, in part, from the struggle between the two poles of energy clashing. **This year, to maintain your energy, your sanity and your joy through the season, balance those the seasonal extremes now.**

Connect daily – hourly even – with the *yin* energy of the natural season (of which you are an integral part) to offset the *yang* of the seasonal holiday.

#### Here's how:

**1. Soups, stews and congees** – food cooked with water or other liquid – nourish deeply with their easily assimilated nutrients and gentle warmth. Eat one or the other daily. Squash soup, with a hint of curry, apple and coconut is my favourite, like a warm blanket in a bowl. Bonus points for using bone broth.

**2. Foods that tonify yin** include millet, barley, rice (eaten as whole grains, not in

flour products); beans, especially black, kidney, mung or green; beets, black- & raspberry, seaweed. **Easy does it with** the red meat, sugar + refined carbs, alcohol (at least until you get to the party!).

**3.** Turn inward daily with quiet practices such as meditation, *yin* yoga, journaling, put on a fire (or a candle) and get lost in flame. Give yourself an opportunity to **turn off for a few minutes every day**. Trust that it will all get done, or that what gets done is enough.

**4.** Take a walk in the early morning or the evening. **Let the quiet penetrate you**, and notice your limbs soften as your muscles warm. Though the earth is nearly frozen, you can still tap into its energy by consciously feeling your feet connect with the ground at every step – imagine red roots running into your soles, nourishing you with the distant warmth of the earth's core.

**5. Balance the giving with a healthy dose of receiving.** We're good at the first, not so much the second.

• **Practise receiving compliments**, an offer of a cup of tea or help in the kitchen. On a recent outing, several people commented on how good I looked – after the 2nd or 3rd time, I noticed my shoulders curled in and my chest collapsed even as I thanked them. Open your heart and let the help, the kindness, the compliment in. As Dr. Northrup says, you then gift the other person with the joy of having their offers of love accepted.

• Consider **including yourself of your own gift-giving list**: maybe treat yourself to a reflexology session, or better yet, tell your family you'd love a gift certificate from your favourite health clinic – that way you can continue to receive nourishing goodness into the new year!



### Magnesium for Stress

By: Dr. Jaclyn Smith, ND  
Naturopathic Doctor

Magnesium is an easily accessible tool for stress management. This mineral relaxes muscles and calms the nervous system, making it an easy choice when trying to navigate the hectic pace of day-to-day life. The following protocol is designed to quickly replenish the body's stores of magnesium to address the many aspects of stress including: pain, headaches, constipation, insomnia, muscle cramps, anxiety and high blood pressure.

It is important to note that all types of magnesium have a stool loosening effect. With that said, some magnesium salts (ex. magnesium glycinate) are better absorbed, thereby increasing systemic benefits, while reducing the laxative effect.

"Bowel Tolerance" is the dose just below the laxative threshold. For the average individual, that dose of magnesium glycinate is 7 capsules per day (1200 mg/day).

*Please note the clinic will be closed  
Dec. 24 to Jan. 1st. and we are now accepting  
donations for the Ottawa food bank.*

#### Determining your Daily Dose of Magnesium

1. Introduce magnesium glycinate using the following chart  
(1 dose = approximately 180mg):

Day	AM	Noon	PM	Bedtime	Total
1				2	2
2	1			2	3
3	1	1		2	4
4	1	1	1	2	5
5	1	1	1	3	6
6	2	1	1	3	7
7	2	2	1	3	8
8	2	2	2	3	9
9	3	2	2	3	10
10	3	3	2	3	11
11	3	3	3	3	12

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# Recipe Corner

## CURRIED BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP WITH APPLE

### Ingredients

1 Tbsp.	butter
2	large onion, chopped
2	garlic cloves, minced
2 Tbsp.	fresh parsley, chopped
1 ½ tsp.	curry powder
5 cups	butternut squash, peeled and cubed
2 ½ cups	vegetable or chicken flavoured broth
1 ½ cups	organic milk or soy milk
pinch	salt and pepper
Optional:	apple chopped

### Directions

- In large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and curry powder. Cook, stirring frequently, about 8 minutes or until onions are soft.
- Add squash and apple (if using) continue stirring for 2 minutes.
- Add stock and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, simmer and cook until squash is tender.
- Remove from heat and allow to cool.
- In food processor or blender process soup in batches until smooth.
- Transfer back to saucepan, stir in milk, salt and pepper. Re-heat over medium heat.

Enjoy!



2. Once you experience loose stool/diarrhea, you have surpassed your threshold and you need to reduce to your maintenance dose.

3. To calculate your maintenance dose, take the dose that caused the loose stool/diarrhea and reduce it by 25% (eliminate the capsules in the morning first).

4. When loose stool/diarrhea occur again (typically within 5-7 days), reduce the "Total" daily dose by 25% once more.

5. Continue this process until you are only using 2-3 capsules of magnesium glycinate at bedtime

Eventually, the supplement should only be required on a per need basis (preferably at bedtime).

So this holiday season as the excitement mounts and the stress follows suit, reach for your magnesium and let the good times roll!



This season, give the gift of wellness. Gift cards can be used to purchase services or products, and can be made in any denomination.

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