

FOOD FREEDOM 4EVER

OCTOBER 2022 EDITION



YOUR SUGAR
FREE
KITCHEN

SPOOKY
MENU

DO YOU
HAVE SAD?

10 THINGS I
WISH I HAD
KNOWN
WHEN I HAD
SURGERY



It is officially Autumn!



The one thing I love about Autumn is Halloween. It is originally an American thing but has really taken on in the UK and Western Europe. The only tough thing about it is that it is so 'candy' based and sugary food and snacks are everywhere.

So I have searched the internet for some healthy, sugar and flour free recipes that you can make that have a Halloween themed feel but that are healthy and yummy. Not just for you but for all the family. Get the kids involved in making these and they will be eating them in no time and not care about the candy bars as much. Plus you will not feel you are missing out.

However, this time of year also makes me really sad, watching all of the trees losing their leaves, the nights getting darker earlier and the cold wind in the air, all make me feel quite down and miserable.

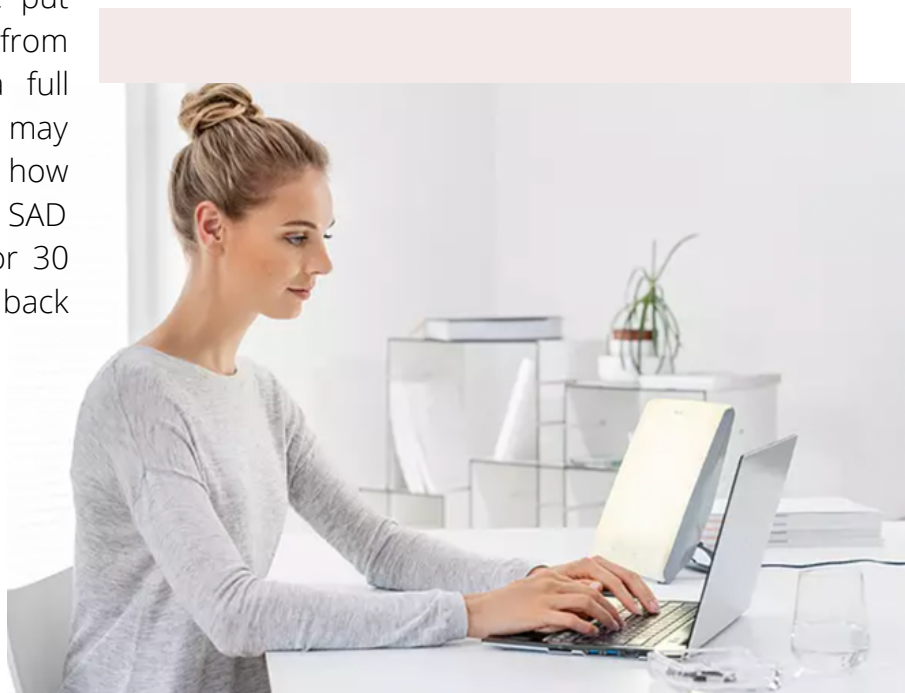
I have been diagnosed with clinic depression many years ago and going into Winter always exacerbates this for me. I have recently been doing a lot of reading about Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and I was wondering how many of us are actually affected by this. So I have put together an article with things I have taken from different places so that you can have a full understanding about what it is, whether you may suffer from it, what treatments there are and how you can get help. I have decided to invest in a SAD light box where I get some light therapy for 30 minutes every morning to help. I shall report back on it's effectiveness in due course.



My second article this month is my "The 10 things I wish I had known before I had my bariatric surgery" article. There are some things that people did not tell me and I really wish I had known them. So I thought I would do a whole article about this to help those of you who are considering or have already had Bariatric surgery.

I am taking a holiday with my grandchildren, daughter in law and best friend (Claire) at the end of the month. We are going to Disney World in Florida and I am so excited. I cannot wait to have some girlie time and to see the faces of my two little granddaughters. Also Claire and I have never been on holiday before and just cannot wait to spend some quality time with her. We are going to have so much fun with our Mickey ears and Halloween costumes.

I am going to take a full break for that two weeks so there will be no support meetings for the first two weeks of November.



At the end of this month (Tuesday 25th October) I will be doing a really fascinating masterclass designed to help you to work out what your life purpose is. The masterclass is suitable for people of all ages to learn what the next step in your life could be to ensure you are living your life to the full and truly fulfilled. When we are feeling fulfilled and useful, we are much less likely to use food as a coping mechanism. So please join me on this workshop. For those of you who cannot attend it will be recorded and next month's article will also be all about this topic.

All that is left is for me to wish you a fabulously scary, spooky, Halloween full of fun and laughter.

Always with love

Amanda



October Agenda

Every week (except holidays) we have a support meeting which includes group and individual coaching and some months we also have a masterclass where I take a topic relating to our journeys and we can explore things on a group and individual basis.

All of these meetings are optional, however, the more you attend and get involved the more will get out of the program.

All meetings are on the same zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81420707528> with the password FF4E

Do not forget to book your monthly one to one coaching call with Amanda (if you don't use it, you lose it). You can access my diary here <https://go.oncehub.com/AmandaDuggan>

October Agenda

DAY	SESSIONS
Thursday 6th	19.00 GMT - Support meeting and group coaching session
Thursday 13th	19.00 GMT - Support meeting and group coaching session
Thursday 20th	19.00 GMT - Support meeting and group coaching session
Tuesday 25th	19.00 GMT - Masterclass "Finding your life purpose"

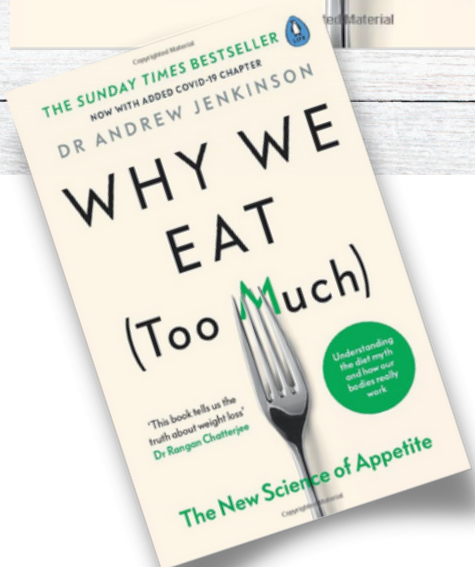
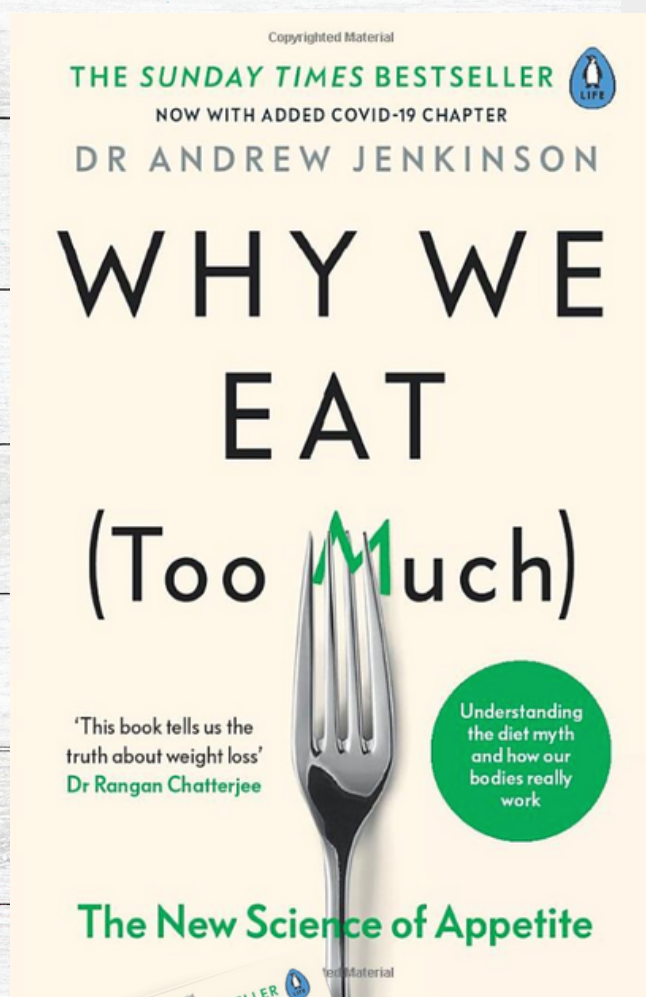


BOOK CLUB – WHY WE EAT TOO MUCH?

I have to say I haven't yet read this book. It is on my reading list for my holidays but I wanted to share it with you all to see what your thoughts are on the philosophy behind it.

It is written by a Bariatric surgeon who specialises in metabolic health and explains all about our metabolism, gut health and set point. All the reasons why some people even after Bariatric Surgery still struggle to stay at a healthy weight.

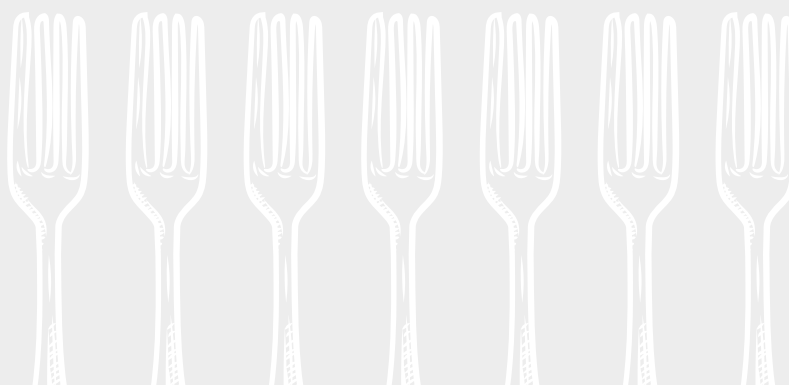
A fascinating read for everyone, pre and post surgery.



One readers review

I once watched a documentary recently about bariatric surgery, and that when these procedures are carried out to help people with weight gain, the hormones ghrelin, which can be found in the gastrointestinal tract, and especially in the stomach and often referred to as the 'hunger hormone' and which tells you that you're hungry, and the other hormone peptide yy which tells the body that they are full, that when altered through such a procedure as bariatric surgery, can make someone who wants to do nothing more than eat suddenly have to keep a journal to remind them to eat, because starvation is no longer a problem.

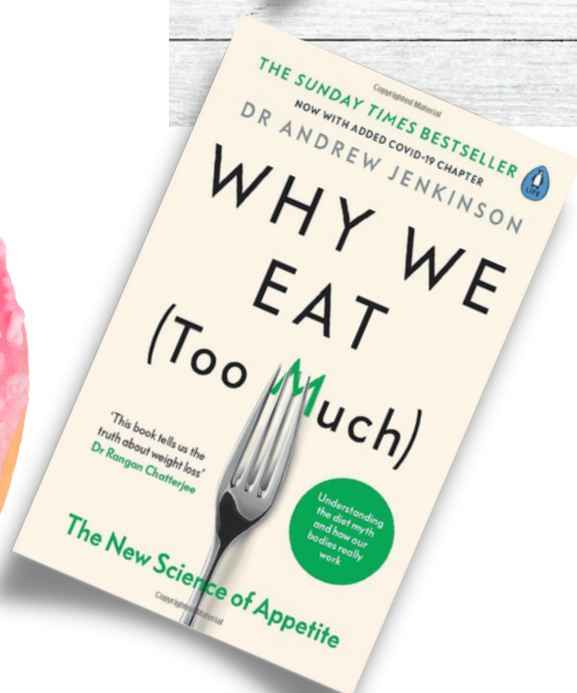
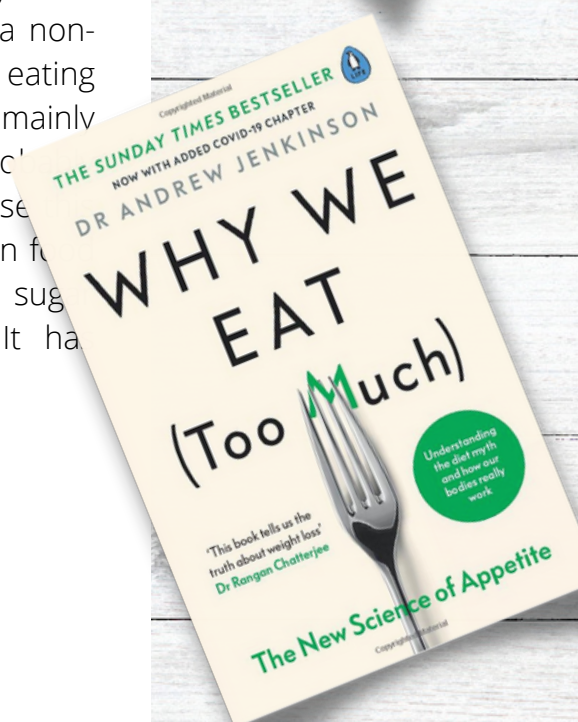
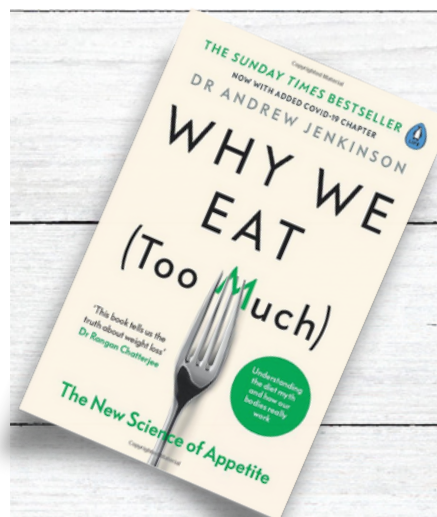
We are ruled by these hormones and for Jenkin's the peptide yy hormone is the most powerful of our drivers when it comes to managing and controlling appetite. However, the flaw when managing obesity and weight loss is that for all of us, this is probably related to our genetics and we have a set point that our body tries to control. We have a set point in our brain that tells us when we need to eat or not. This can be disrupted when we are young, for example babies who are fed too quickly using fast flow teats, that can lead to later obesity patterns.



BOOK CLUB – WHY WE EAT TOO MUCH?

Diets seldom work, even in documentaries that show people with significant weight loss, often revert back to the previous weight. Our appetite, which includes the uncontrollable urge to eat and our feeling of satiety which gives us the feeling that sufficient food has been taken in are strongly controlled by these newly discovered hormones that originate in our stomach and our intestines. The stomach hormone ghrelin tells us to go out and seek food and the hormone peptide yy, originating in the intestines, sends us the messages to stop eating so that we know we've had enough food. These hormonal signals are extremely powerful and work at a subconscious level.

This book is full of fascinating scientific discoveries that probably show the best way to develop a healthy relationship with food and a non-fluctuating weight gain is through mindfulness, sleep, and eating generally healthy food. Throughout the history of man, we have mainly known only 1% of the population to obese, although this proportion changed when the introduction of sugar occurred, which increased the number to 15%. However since the 1980s, significant changes in food such as eating too much processed food, changes in our sugar consumption, have led to significant increases in weight. It has probably changed cognition and mental behaviour also.



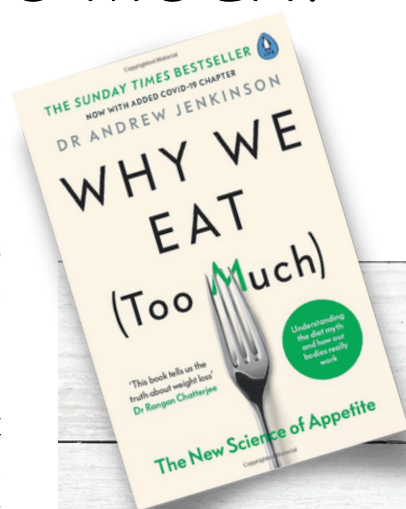
BOOK CLUB – WHY WE EAT TOO MUCH?

The book begins with a powerful quote: 'Humans talk, write, walk, and love using the same amount of energy per second as a light bulb, a device that does nothing but shine light and get hot. This amazing fact, far from denigrating humans, is a testament to how efficient a human body is. but more importantly, it is a testament to the wondrous complexity of our body's, which can do so much with so little.' Peter m Hoffman (2012).

Jenkin author makes a powerful argument that the one essential but that the missing from my diet is Omega-3. it is one of the essential fats along with omega-6, but we now have so much omega-6 in our diet and not enough omega-3, that the author suggests that this is impacting on our weight control. We need to balance these two fats out more. We also need to be aware that in countries such as France or Inuit tribes where they eat an awful lot of fat in their diet, do not become obese. but the enemy in the sugar.

In chapter 14, there are some wonderful exercises on how to use mindfulness to help develop more awareness of what you're eating. We also need to eat more food made from scratch rather than food soaked in vegetable oil and stop eating processed food.

They're also useful summaries at the end of each chapter which will help you recap the information presented in the book. A fascinating book full of fascinating information and very readable.



Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

What is seasonal affective disorder (SAD)?

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that you experience during particular seasons or times of year. Depression is a low mood that lasts for a long time, and affects your everyday life.

If you have SAD, you'll experience depression during some seasons in particular, or because of certain types of weather or temperature. You can experience it in winter or summer.

"It's like having your own portable black cloud."

It's common to be affected by changing seasons and weather, or to have times of year when you feel more or less comfortable. For example, you might find that your mood or energy levels drop when it gets colder or warmer, or notice changes in your sleeping or eating patterns.

But if your feelings are interfering with your everyday life, it could be a sign that you have depression. And if they keep coming back at the same time of year, doctors might call this seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or 'seasonal depression'.

"In the weeks before the clocks go back, I start to feel sluggish and down. It's harder to keep to my morning routine of going out for a walk before breakfast because it's wet, cold and dark."



What are the symptoms of SAD?

If you have SAD, you might experience some of the signs and symptoms below. But it's different for different people, and can vary season to season, so you might also have other kinds of feelings which aren't listed here:

- **Lack of energy**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Not wanting to see people**
- **Feeling sad, low, tearful, guilty or hopeless**
- **Feeling anxious, angry and agitated**
- **Being more prone to physical health problems, such as colds, infections or other illnesses**
- **Sleeping too much, or difficulty waking up (common with SAD in winter)**
- **Sleeping too little, or waking up a lot (common with SAD in summer)**
- **Changes in your appetite, for example feeling hungrier or not wanting to eat**
- **Losing interest in sex or physical contact**
- **Suicidal feelings**
- **Other symptoms of depression**



If you also have other mental health problems, you might find that things get worse at times when you're affected by SAD.

If you feel unable to keep yourself safe, it's a mental health emergency. Get emergency advice if this is the case.

"I just can't stay awake and the thought of having to go out, stay awake, make conversation. I just can't do it."

Are there common misconceptions about SAD?

Lots of people have heard of SAD, but this doesn't mean that they understand what it's like or how you're affected. It doesn't mean you 'just feel a bit low in winter'. There are many factors that can cause it or make it worse, and it can affect your life just as much as other types of depression.

It can be frustrating and upsetting if people don't understand this, but it's important to remember that you are not alone.

What causes SAD?

The exact causes of SAD aren't clear – a range of different factors are likely to contribute and these can vary a lot between different people.

Research suggests that the causes are similar to causes of depression, but there are also factors which can lead specifically to SAD.

Possible causes of SAD include:

Effects of light

When light hits the back of your eye, messages go to the part of your brain that controls sleep, appetite, sex drive, temperature, mood and activity. If there isn't enough light, these functions can slow down and gradually stop



Some people seem to need a lot more light than others. This may mean they're more likely to get SAD during the winter months.

"It's like someone has switched off the light suddenly. I'm plunged into darkness, which paralyses me and keeps me pinned down to my bed."

Disrupted body clock

Your brain sets your body clock by the hours of daylight. One theory is that if you experience SAD in the winter, this part of your brain isn't working in the same way. This could mean your body clock is out of sync with daylight, leading to tiredness and depression. Some researchers think this is because your sleep pattern starts at a different time.

Is SAD more common in certain countries?

SAD is thought to be more common in countries where there are greater changes in the weather and in daylight hours during different seasons. This includes England and Ireland.

"The evening is endless. I would watch the clock and feel trapped in the dark."

Problems with melatonin and serotonin levels

When it's dark, your brain produces a hormone called melatonin which helps your body get ready for sleep. The levels of serotonin, a brain chemical that affects your mood, are also affected by how much sunlight you get.

Some people with winter SAD seem to produce higher levels of melatonin and lower level of serotonin during winter. Research suggests these can contribute to winter SAD, but the exact relationship between them isn't clear.

When winter comes and I feel the change in the seasons, I feel more drained. I find it very hard to motivate myself into getting dressed or out of bed."

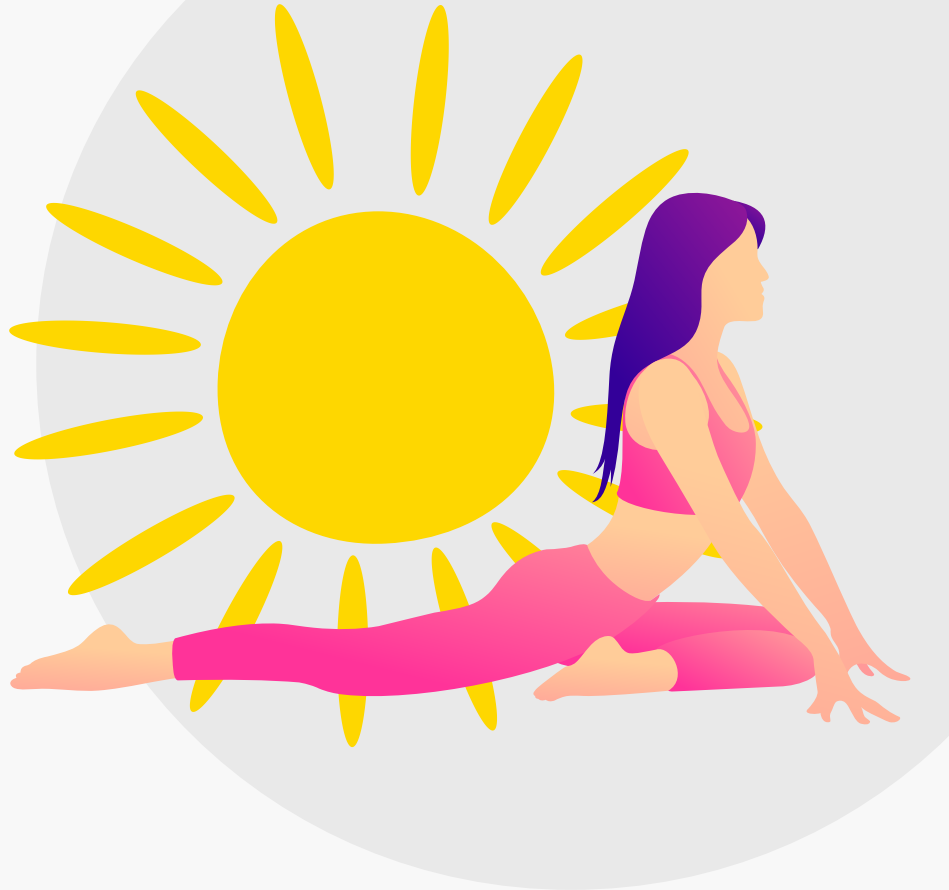


Weather and temperatures

We all have different experiences of particular seasons and types of weather. You might feel particularly uncomfortable in hotter or colder temperatures, which could contribute to you developing depression (or any existing depression worsening) at those times.

While more people are aware of SAD happening in winter, some people have more difficulty in warmer weather. Some studies have suggested that summer SAD is linked to higher temperatures and humidity. But more research is needed to understand why.

Exercise in natural light is really helpful.”



"Sunshine and heat make me feel defensive, misanthropic, angry, anxious, resentful and impatient. I don't want to see anyone, go anywhere or do anything.

Even bright, low winter light depresses me. I feel under siege." says one patient struggling from Summer SAD.

Do stressful times of year cause SAD?

SAD is diagnosed if your depression has a seasonal pattern. Some of us might have other times of the year, we find especially difficult, such as Christmas or bereavement anniversaries when we feel depressed. Some other mental health problems can also have a seasonal pattern, like bipolar disorder.

These feelings aren't necessarily a form of SAD but they can still mean that you need extra support at certain times of year.

How can I help myself?

Living with SAD can be difficult, but there are lots of things you can do to help yourself cope. Here are some suggestions for you to consider.

Different things work for different people at different times, so if something doesn't feel possible just now try not to put pressure on yourself. You can always try something else or come back to it another time.

Winter SAD - practical day-to-day tips

If SAD affects you during winter, there are particular things you could try that might help. You could:

- **Make the most of natural light.** It might help to spend time in natural light, for example going for walks, spending time in parks or gardens, or simply sitting near a window. This seems to be helpful if you experience SAD in winter.
- **Plan ahead for winter.** For example, try to make meals in advance and freeze them if you know you are likely to lack the energy to do this during the most difficult period.

Summer SAD - practical day-to-day tips

If SAD affects you during hot weather, there are particular things you could try that might help. You could:

- **Drink plenty of water so that you stay hydrated.**
- **Find ways to keep cool, such as finding shade or wearing loose clothing.**
- **Visit indoor places. Staying inside all the time could make you feel isolated. It could help to try doing activities indoors, like visiting your local library or going to the cinema.**
- **Plan ahead for summer. For example, try to avoid going outside at the hottest times of day where possible.**

Talk to someone

It can be hard to reach out when you're not feeling well, but it might help to share how you're feeling. If you don't feel you can talk to the people around you or you need additional support, you could contact a helpline such as:

• Samaritans – open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to listen to anything that's upsetting you. You can call 116 123 (free from any phone),

email jo@samaritans.org or visit some branches in person. You can also call the Welsh Language Line on 0300 123 3011 (7pm–11pm every day).

• SANEline – support for people experiencing a mental health problem or supporting someone else. You can call them on 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm– 10.30pm every day).

• Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) – support for anyone who wants to talk. You can call them on 0800 58 58 58 (5pm–midnight every day) or use their webchat service.

“SAD is like a cold blanket that keeps depression and anxiety wrapped close to me. When I feel I can, I go outside and face the sun, close my eyes and focus on the light and warmth.”

Keep a diary

You might find it helps to keep a note of your symptoms, including when they start and if particular things seem to trigger them, including changes in the weather. This could help you notice any pattern



You could also make a note of things that feel helpful for you or which seem to make things worse. This can be helpful because SAD affects you at some times and not others, so you might not easily remember these details.

"I keep a daily diary and it's helpful to look back over the years and see how each year I've felt the downward spiral starting."

Plan for difficult times

If you've noticed your symptoms follow a pattern, you may be able to work out when they're most likely to start in the future. This may help you put things in place for those times.

For example, you could:

- **Re-arrange stressful activities or events for another time.**
- **Plan relaxing activities that might help improve your mood.**
- **Plan ahead, such as stocking up on things you need.**
- **Make more spare time to rest or do things you enjoy.**
- **Create a self-care box.**

"December is dark but the festive lights and cheerfulness are an antidote. I now put up my Christmas decorations really early (1st Dec) as a way of coping with my SAD symptoms and stretching out the 'fairy-lights antidote' for a whole month."



Try peer support

Peer support brings together people who have had similar experiences. Some people find this very helpful.

To find peer support, you could:

- **Ask your GP for details of support groups, and if you live in England you can also contact your local psychological therapies service.**

"I have a dawn simulator alarm clock which lights up gradually to fill my space in the bedroom with a glow."

Learn ways to relax

- Manage stress. It can help to think of ways to manage pressure and build your emotional resilience.
- Try some relaxation techniques. Learning to relax can help you look after your wellbeing when you are feeling stressed, anxious or busy.
- Spend time in nature. Being outside in green space can help you feel more in touch with your surroundings.

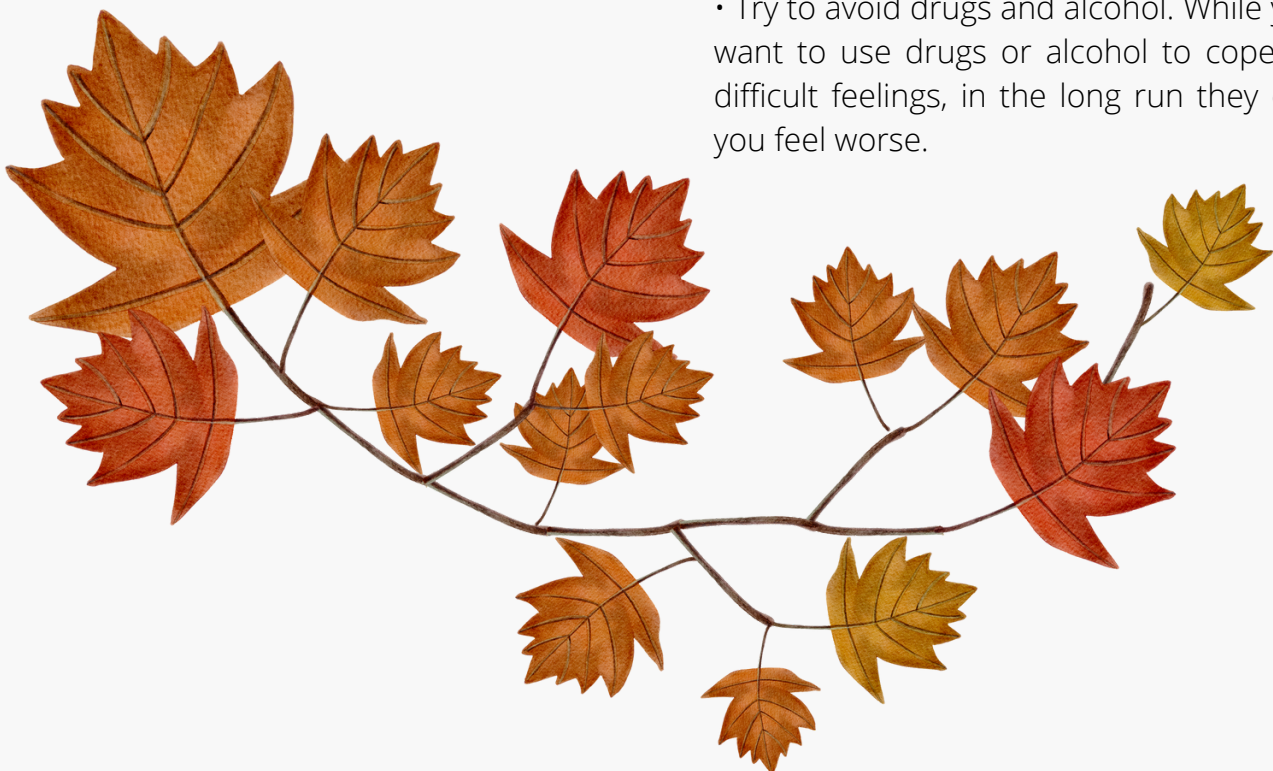
"I get up early, wrap up warm, put on my pedometer and walk in the dark to enjoy the solitude. By the time people are up and about, I'm back home having walked a good few miles and feel so much better for it."

Look after your physical health

Looking after your physical health can make a difference to how you feel emotionally.

For example, it can help to:

- Think about your diet. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can be difficult when you have SAD. But trying your best to manage this where possible could make a difference to your mood and energy levels.
- Try to do some physical activity. If you find exercise a challenge remember that even gentle activities like yoga, swimming or walking can be a big boost to your mood.
- Get help with sleep problems. For lots of people who experience SAD, sleeping too little or too much can be a problem.
- Try to look after your hygiene. When you're experiencing SAD, it's easy for hygiene to not feel like a priority. But small things, like taking a shower and getting fully dressed whether or not you're going out of the house, can make a big difference to how you feel.
- Try to avoid drugs and alcohol. While you might want to use drugs or alcohol to cope with any difficult feelings, in the long run they can make you feel worse.



"In summer my eyes, skin, throat and muscles ache. I find it difficult to concentrate. I can't take in information, and my short-term memory is unreliable.

Evenings come as a relief. I feel my muscles relaxing as the sun goes down."

What treatments are there for SAD?

Whether or not your depression seems to be seasonal, it's ok to ask for help at any time.

You don't need to wait to see if there's a pattern.

How can I access treatment?

The first step is usually to visit your GP. If you're given a diagnosis of SAD, this will be based on your symptoms repeatedly following a seasonal pattern, usually for two or more years. Or if the seasonal pattern isn't clear yet you can still get help from your GP for symptoms of depression or anxiety.

"I was well into adulthood before I began to recognise a pattern. Initially I noticed that I often took more sick leave from my job in the winter months." The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines say you should be offered the same types of treatments for SAD as for other types of depression, including talking therapies and medication.

This is because there isn't currently enough evidence to show whether or not particular treatments help with SAD. You can read the full guidelines on the NICE website, including recommendations on treating SAD. This information uses the term 'seasonal depression' to describe SAD.



Talking therapies

There are many different talking therapies that can be effective in treating depression.

“My energy levels fluctuated between autumn/winter and spring/summer. I absolutely dreaded the onset of darker days and felt that I was literally shutting down.”

Medication

You might be offered an antidepressant, either on its own or in combination with talking therapy. This will most commonly be a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI).

Your GP might recommend you start taking them a few weeks before the season when your symptoms normally begin.

“Antidepressants have helped to put me in a place where I was more able to cope with counselling. This required a lot of hard work and I had to accept a completely different way of thinking.”

Medication really helps some people but isn't right for others. Before deciding to take any drug, it's important to make sure you have all the facts you need to make an informed choice.

Light therapy

Some people with winter SAD find it helpful to use a light box – a device that gives off strong white or blue light. Or a lamp or alarm clock that simulates dawn. This is sometimes called light therapy.

The NHS doesn't usually provide light therapy because there isn't yet much evidence to show it works, although some people find it helpful. So more research needs to be done to establish why it works for some people and not others.

You can buy light therapy equipment yourself but unfortunately it tends to be expensive. For more information on how light therapy works and tips on how to choose a light box see the NHS guidance on trying light therapy.



Light therapy might not be suitable for you if you're using other treatments that can make your skin sensitive to light. For example:

- **St John's wort**
- **Some antipsychotics**
- **Some antibiotics**

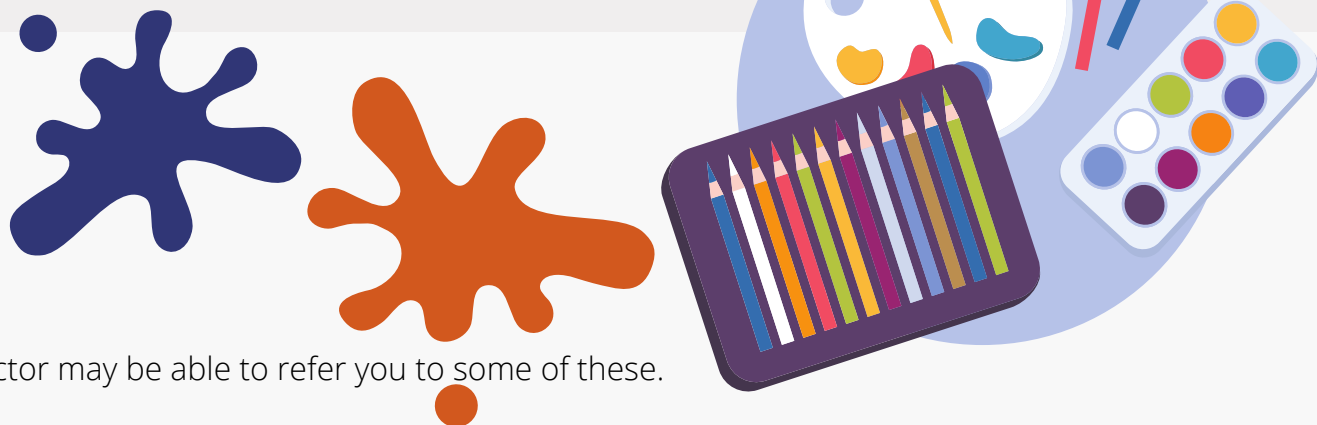
If you decide to try using a light box or lamp, you may wish to discuss this with your doctor who can advise on whether it's suitable for you to try. If you have existing eye problems or use a light box regularly, it's also a good idea to talk to an optician and to have regular eye check-ups.

"Using a light box wasn't perfect but the change was tangible. A real shift. I began to cope better with the dark days and didn't have the all-encompassing desire to get back into bed and stay there."

Other treatments

You might also decide to try other treatments alongside, or instead of, talking therapies or medication. These might include:

- **Complementary and alternative therapies**
- **Ecotherapy (nature-based treatments)**
- **Arts and creative therapies**



Your doctor may be able to refer you to some of these.

What if I don't feel better?

Your doctor should offer you regular appointments to check how you're doing, and see how well any treatment is working for you. Different things work for different people at different times, and if a particular medication or talking therapy doesn't work for you, your doctor should be able to suggest an alternative.

If you've tried a range of treatments and none of them have helped, speak to your doctor about this and they may be able to refer you for additional support.

How can other people help?

This information is for family or friends who want to support someone with SAD.

If you are supporting a friend or relative who is experiencing SAD it can be hard to know what you can do to help. This section has some suggestions of things you could try while also looking after your own wellbeing.

Let them know you are there

Lots of people can find it hard to open up about how they're feeling. One of the most important things you can do is let the person you're worried about know that you care and that it's ok to talk about what they're experiencing.

"Their self-esteem is very low in the winter months, particularly November and December, as the days get shorter."

Support them to seek help

Supporting your friend or loved one to seek help can be really important. It can help to remind them that SAD is a recognised condition like many others, and that they deserve help and support.

"I can see my family members with winter SAD shutting down through autumn, until in winter they are prone to afternoon naps, shutting themselves away alone in a room, and have a lack of interest in anything."

Don't be critical

If you've not experienced SAD yourself, it can be hard to understand why your friend or family member can't just 'snap out of it'. Try not to blame them. They are probably being very critical and harsh towards themselves already.

It's also important to not put pressure on them to feel or behave a certain way, for example expecting someone to be active and particularly happy in the summer. Be sensitive when talking about the weather. It's common to describe certain types of weather as being good or bad, for example talking about 'nice weather' or describing rainy days as 'dreary' or 'miserable'.

This could make someone with SAD feel criticised or alone, so it might really help if you consider how you talk about different types of weather.

Ask them what helps

SAD can affect people in different ways, so it's important to ask your friend or loved one what support they would find most helpful, and what has or hasn't helped them in the past. They may just want your emotional support or there may be specific practical things you could do that could help them cope.

What people need can also change over time, so it is a good idea to check in with them regularly to see if anything has changed.

Help them to plan ahead

If you have some idea when their symptoms are likely to start, you may want to plan things in advance that might help. For example, you could:

- **Schedule time to offer practical support**
- **Plan activities to help them relax**
- **Make sure there will be people around to offer support**

It may also help to avoid planning any activities during the period that they find particularly difficult, and to talk together about what demands they can cope with. For example, you might decide to avoid having guests during difficult times.

"I try to encourage my winter-suffering family members to think ahead and get helpful things organised for during their difficult time before winter starts, while they still have the energy and ability to do so."

Stay in touch

SAD can cause people to feel very isolated. For example, if they don't feel up to joining in with social activities or they struggle to find things they can do during difficult times.

It could help to suggest things they might find easier to do such as, in the case of someone who feels worse in hot weather, doing indoor activities like watching a film together.



Look after yourself

There are times when supporting someone can be challenging. So it's common to feel overwhelmed at times.

It's important to look after your own mental health too. It may help if you:

Set boundaries and don't take too much on. It's important to decide what your limits are and how much you are able to help them. Your needs matter too and you'll want to avoid becoming unwell yourself.

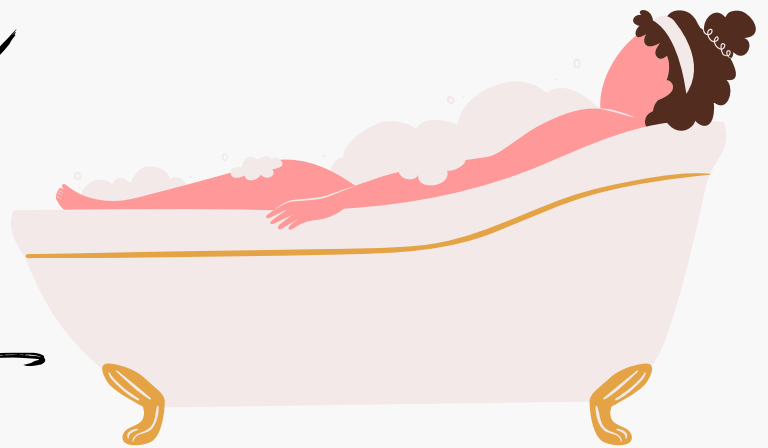
Share your caring role with others, if you can. It's often easier to support someone if you're not doing it alone.

Talk to others about how you're feeling. You may want to be careful about how much information you share about the person you're supporting, but talking about your own feelings with someone you trust can help you feel supported too.

If this affects you, please reach out to Amanda who would be very interested to hear your story and to try and support you.



Self care
is so
important



Article adapted and taken from MIND website

10 (welll 11 actually) things I wish I had known before I had bariatric surgery



Your bowel movements can be all over the place

Sorry to bring up the subject of 'poo' but I think this is really important.

After surgery, my bowel movements were all over the place. At first due to all of the medication I had been on, I was seriously constipated, then I fluctuated between very loose stools and constipation for at least the first two years.

It was quite a shock, because I hadn't been told.



You may be exhausted for the first few weeks

The surgery really takes it out of your body. Not only have you had an anaesthetic to recover from but you have also reduced your calories so dramatically that your body is in turmoil.

I could not believe how quickly I got tired. I was ready for bed most nights at about 8pm.

It may be worth considering part time hours if you can for the first few weeks.

Taking small naps in the day can help too

Plus keeping up with your protein really helps with this.



You will get cold right down to your bones!

I remember this being one of the most uncomfortable side effects of weight loss surgery. I was freezing!

I could not get warm. I used to have to go and have a bath every night to warm my bones up.

I was constantly surrounded by blankets and hot water bottles.

Rapid weight loss results in the loss of body fat, which obviously impacts the way that a person is insulated from cooler temperatures. During rapid weight loss, a person's metabolism slows down as well, which can similarly cause issues with overall body temperature.



You will stall very regularly

Weight loss is not an exact science. The body is a very complicated organism and there are many physiological and psychological systems in place that all add up to weight loss. Every individual is completely different, different size, metabolism, hormones, health, medication, genetics etc. It is unreasonable to expect to lose weight at a steady weight every single week.

The body often stalls whilst it reequilibrates itself and 'gets used to' your new set point weight. When you are losing weight very quickly after surgery because your calorie deficit is so low, your set point weight changes often. The body resists changing this set point and whilst it is resisting you will have a stall.

Do not get discouraged, just keep doing exactly what you have been told by your bariatric team and eventually the weight loss will start again.



You may get depressed after surgery

Let's face it most of us had a very unhealthy relationship with food. The reason I got overweight in the first place was a mixture of genetics and my inability to cope with life and emotions.

I used food to fix my emotions from a very early age. In fact, I was taught to do this. If I was sad or upset, out would come a lollipop or a chocolate bar. It soothed me and stopped the tears.

But it taught me not to express my emotions and push them down with food. For half a decade I did not know how to express my emotions in a safe and bounded way and used food to take away the difficult feelings this caused.

After surgery, we can no longer use food in the same way and we are left with our raw emotions. This can be incredibly difficult to handle and depression and anxiety are very common.

That is why I offer the Bariatric Success Solution, my twelve month program that teaches you how to handle your emotions without food, uncovers any sabotage and provides you with accountability, knowledge and support.

It is my experience that most people who do not get help with this suffer weight gain after the surgery, with up to 30% regaining all of the weight lost.



Cross addiction to alcohol is very common

Addiction transfer, or cross addiction, after bariatric surgery occurs when individuals trade compulsive eating for other compulsive behaviours. There is also strong evidence of a biological reason for cross addiction.

Studies show various forms of transfer addiction in up to 30 percent of patients who have had bariatric surgery. For these patients, food is no longer being a source of comfort, distraction, reward or escape. Other behaviours or substances now substitute for eating, and can become problematic.

“Process addictions,” such as gambling, shopping and sex addiction can occur, as well as addictions to alcohol and other drug abuse. In some cases, after a period of initial remission, food addiction can reoccur.

This is why psychological support and learning to cope with emotions and compulsive behaviour is so important for long term success.

You will most likely have buyers remorse



You will most likely have buyers remorse - the first few weeks after bariatric surgery everything is really different and can feel overwhelming. You have to remember to sip every few minutes, you cannot eat solid foods for a few weeks and when you can the portion size will often be only a few mouth fulls. This can be when buyers remorse sets in.

The first 12 weeks are the hardest; most patients settle down after 12 weeks and get used to their new stomach, the weight is dropping off and the buyer's remorse disappears.

So the moral of the story is, hang on in there, it does get better!!



30% of patients regain all of their weight

The majority of patients will regain between 5 and 15% of the weight they lose within the first 5 years after surgery. However, some studies show that up to 30% of patients will regain all of the weight lost.

The main reason for total regain is that the patient has not made the necessary lifestyle and psychological changes after surgery and have been relying solely on the surgery to solve the weight loss.

The surgery itself is only a tool, there is a lot of effort needed from the patient themselves to ensure that they are eating the correct foods in the correct quantities and that they change their lifestyle habits.

This can be very difficult to accomplish alone after many years of disordered eating.

If you want to make sure that you are not one of the 30% join our Bariatric Success Solution optimal support program and change your relationship with food and life so that you have the ultimate long term success possible.



Exercise is key

Exercise is key. Moving your body more is vital after having bariatric surgery. In the first few weeks only walking is recommended until everything internally has healed.

After that strength training exercises to build muscle and tone your body are the best type of exercise because when you build muscle you burn more calories even when you are resting.

But ultimately, anything that gets you moving more and enjoying life will not only help you to lose weight but will give you joy and happiness.



You have to give up fizzy drinks

Although each surgery centre will have different guidelines it is typically recommended not to drink fizzy drinks for at least the first twelve months after surgery

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When you drink carbonated beverages after gastric sleeve surgery, the carbon dioxide is released into your stomach. This occupies space in your stomach, causes it to expand, and puts pressure on the incision site.

Patients experience uncomfortable bloating symptoms which can be very painful due to the reduced stomach size. Symptoms of excess gas and acid reflux are commonly experienced when consuming carbonated beverages.

Apart from this, the carbon dioxide occupies space in your stomach that could be taken up by nutrient-dense foods and liquids.

Carbonated beverages have almost no nutritional value and will be wasting space in your stomach. These drinks give you a false sense of satiation. Soon after, you will be craving something else to satisfy you and you are likely to eat more in response, particularly sugary foods which will cause weight gain.

Bariatric surgery does not cure sugar addiction

You still need to be careful about what you eat

You still need to be careful what you eat - one fallacy I see often about bariatric surgery is that people think you can have the surgery and it is a magic wand. You will be able to eat whatever you wish but just in small portions.

This is not true. The surgery only does 30% of the work for you, the other 70% is down to you.

For example, you can fit a lot of high-calorie chocolate in a tiny tummy because by the time the chocolate hits your tummy it is liquid and therefore takes up little room.

However, if you were to eat solid protein such as chicken, you would only be able to eat a few mouthfuls and because solid protein is also low in calories you will naturally lose weight.

It really is important what you eat after the surgery if you want long-term success.





SPOOKY

Recipes from Your Sugar Free Kitchen

Halloween can be a difficult time if we are not prepared properly. However, with these recipes you can have lots of fun with all the family and enjoy Halloween in a happy and healthy way.



Sweet Potato Jack O'lanterns



Makes 6
Prep: 10 mins
cook: 30 mins



WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat your oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Scrub your sweet potatoes and pat them dry. Peel the potatoes.

Cut off the ends of each sweet potato and then carefully slice the sweet potatoes into rounds. Each round should be about ¼-inch thick. Discard the ends that you cut off.

Use a paring knife to cut out the Jack o'-lantern face on each round. Cut triangles for the eyes and nose and a smile for the mouth. Be careful to not cut too close to the edge of the rounds or they might rip.

Lay the cut sweet potato rounds on the baking sheet. Be sure not to let them overlap.

Drizzle the olive oil over the tops of the sweet potato rounds, making sure the oil gets on most parts of the tops and bottoms of the sweet potato rounds. Sprinkle the salt over the tops.

Bake the rounds for 30-35 minutes, flipping them once during the cooking process. They will be done when they start to turn golden brown at the edges. Be careful to not let them burn.

Remove the baking sheet from the oven and let the sweet potato rounds cool for a few minutes before serving.

Avocado and Wasabi Halloween Devilled Eggs



Serves: 4
Prep: 10 mins
cook: 10 mins



WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- 1 large avocado, seeded and peeled
- 1 tsp wasabi paste
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black sesame seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

Place in eggs and blueberries in a small pan.

Cover the eggs with water, cover the pan and bring to boil over high heat. Boil them for 5 minutes, then turn off the heat. Let the eggs sit in the blueberry water for 10 minutes.

Remove eggs, one at a time, and gently press and crack the shell with the back of the spoon.

Place the cracked eggs in a bowl and add the blueberry water. Allow them to cool to room temperature, then place the eggs in the blueberry water in the refrigerator for 6 hours or up to overnight.

Peel the eggs and cut in half lengthwise, scoop out the yolks and place in a bowl.

Add avocado, wasabi, lemon juice and salt to the egg yolks and mash together until smooth.

Place avocado mix into a piping bag and pipe into the hollowed egg halves or use a spoon and scoop them back into the egg halves.

Chill until ready to serve.

Prior to serving, garnish eggs with sesame seeds.

Silly apple bites

kids will love these



Serves: 4
Prep: 10 mins



WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 green apples, quartered
- peanut butter
- 32 sunflower seeds
- 2-3 strawberries, sliced
- 1-2 googly eyes per apple bite

INSTRUCTIONS

Cut the middles out of each quarter of the apple to create a mouth. Don't worry about perfection, you are filling this gap with peanut butter anyway so if you cut too deep, you can always just cover it up and no one will know.

Coat the inside of the cut gap with a filling of peanut butter.

Place 4 sunflower seeds on the top of the "mouth" for the teeth.

Place 1 slice of strawberry inside the mouth for the tongue.

"Glue" each eye above the mouth with a dab of peanut butter to stick.

Serve with a massive smile.

THE BEST ROASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS!



Serves: 6
Prep: 10 mins
cook: 40 mins



WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 1/2 tsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp cayenne
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- parchment paper

INSTRUCTIONS

This is easy peasy!

Wash your pumpkin seeds off to get rid of as much pumpkin goop as possible. You can leave some in if you choose!

Toss your seeds with the olive oil and spices and spread out evenly on a parchment lined baking sheet.

Bake at 300 degrees for 40 minutes, taking them out and stirring them halfway through.

Let cool for a minute and enjoy!

Candy Corn fruit kebabs



Makes 50
1 serving 5 kebabs
Prep: 10 mins



Contains tiny bit of
honey, leave out if
you are highly sugar
sensitive

WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 Banana
- 1/2 Red Papaya(or cantaloupe, orange, mandarin)
- 1/2 Pineapple (or mango)
- 2 Passionfruit
- 2 tsp clear, mild honey
- Couple of squeezes fresh lime or lemon
- Mini Kebab Sticks

These quantities made about 50 mini kebabs

INSTRUCTIONS

Peel the banana, pineapple and papaya. Cut the pineapple and papaya in half lengthways. Core the pineapple and deseed papaya. Slice each piece of fruit horizontally at the same width – just under 1cm or about 1/3 inch

Cut banana rounds into six even triangular pieces. Cut pineapple and papaya into curved strips, roughly the same as it's width

To cut the fruit for kebabs use one of the banana pieces as a guide. Measure and cut the papaya first, then use this piece to measure length of pineapple.

Place fruit on mini kebab sticks! Pineapple first, then papaya and finally banana!

To make the syrup simply mix the honey and passionfruit together. If you find that they don't mix too well, you can heat them slightly over a low-heat stove – add the lime after they are combined and stir again

Spicy Honey Chicken and Sweet Potato Kebabs



Serves: 6
Prep: 10 mins
cook: 15 mins



1 protein
1 carb
1/2 fat



Contains tiny bit of honey, leave out if you are highly sugar sensitive

WHAT YOU NEED

- 3 sweet potatoes
- 6 chicken thighs - boneless and skinless
- 2 sweet onion
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- spices – garlic powder, chilli powder, salt, pepper, cumin, paprika, and red chilli flakes
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp apple cider vinegar

INSTRUCTIONS

Start off with par-boiling the sweet potatoes first. Peel the potatoes and cut into 1-inch cubes. Place into a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil.

Once boiling, set your timer to 5 minutes and cook until they are nearly cooked through. Drain and transfer to a bowl to cool.

While the sweet potatoes are cooking, make your spice mixture, which consists of seven different spices. Then make the glaze, which is literally honey, olive oil and apple cider vinegar whisked together.

Toss the chicken with half of the spice mixture. Divide the remaining spice mixture between the sweet potatoes and onions, and toss to combine.

Thread chicken, sweet potatoes, and onions onto the skewers. Make sure to soak the skewers in water for at least 30 minutes to prevent burning. Brush the skewers with half of the honey glaze.

Cook on pre-heated grill over medium direct heat for about 8 minutes, turning frequently. Remove from grill and brush on the remaining glaze. If desired, garnish with fresh basil before serving.

Paleo Pumpkin Chili Recipe



Serves: 6
Prep: 5 mins
cook: 25 mins



1 protein
1/2 veg
1/4 carb
1/4 fat

WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 tablespoon Olive oil
- 1 large White onion (diced)
- 6 cloves Garlic (minced)
- 1 medium Bell pepper (diced)
- 1 medium Jalapeño (minced)
- 1 1/2 pounds beef mince
- 2 14.5-oz cans tomatoes
- 1 cup Beef broth
- 1 tablespoon Paprika
- 1 tablespoon Chili powder
- 1 teaspoon Cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon Sea salt
- 1 15-oz can Pumpkin puree

INSTRUCTIONS

In a large pan over medium-high heat, heat the olive oil. Brown the onion and garlic for a 3-5 minutes, until they start to develop colour.

Add in the bell pepper and jalapeño, and cook for 3-5 minutes, until soft.

Crumble in the beef and cook until browned, about 8-10 minutes.

Add the tomatoes, broth, and spices. Simmer for 5 minutes.

Add the pumpkin. Continue to cook for 10 minutes to allow flavours to meld together.

Divide between 6 bowls and garnish with coriander.

HALLOWEEN ANTIPASTO SKEWERS



Serves: 6
Prep: 10 mins
cook: 9 hours



1/2 fat
1/2 veg
1 dairy

WHAT YOU NEED

18 small mozzarella balls
18 black olives
18 orange cherry tomatoes
6 skewers

INSTRUCTIONS

Are you planning on throwing a Halloween party this year? Looking for some last minute food ideas that aren't packed with sugar and are a little bit healthier than traditional Halloween treats?

This simple yet eye catching antipasto skewer that is just perfect for Halloween using orange sunburst cherry tomatoes, small pearl size mozzarella balls, and black olives.

Simply assemble your skewers alternating between the three and display on your Halloween themed plate or standing up in a glass. Aren't they super simple, yet striking?!

Healthy Apple Crumble



Serves: 6
Prep: 10 mins
cook: 20 mins



WHAT YOU NEED

For the Apples:

- 3 large granny smith Apples (cut into small bite-sized cubes, about 2 cups)
- 1 tbsp sukrin gold sweetener
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp mixed spice

For the Crumble:

- 50 g raw almonds
- 100g oats
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 tbsp sukrin gold sweetener

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven 350°F/180°C

Peel the apples (if desired) and cut into bite-sized pieces.

Sauté the apples in a pan until soft. I like to start by adding a half cup of hot water and adding a ¼ cup every time the water runs out, until the apples are soft. I usually need to do this 2-3 times and it takes about 10 minutes.

When the apples are soft, add ½ tablespoon honey, ½ cup coconut cream and cinnamon and mix until combined. Set aside.

Add the almonds, oats, coconut oil and sweetener to a food processor and blitz until fine and combined.

Divide the apples between 4 oven safe ramekins, top with the almond crumble and bake in the oven for 15 minutes, until the almond crumble is golden.

Serve immediately with a dollop of natural yogurt and fresh strawberries. (Optional)

Tips and Tricks:

Technically, the crumb doesn't need to be baked, so if you're pressed for time, you can forego that part of the recipe. Baking it does add an extra touch of deliciousness so when you do have the time - bake it!



Nutrition Disclaimer

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