



## 4 SIMPLE COMFORT FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS

by Mechelle Meadows

Winter—the time of year our tummies crave comfort food. Unfortunately, many common winter dishes such as casseroles, hearty pastas, and chowders can be calorie-heavy from fat. Eating too much fat can be bad for your heart’s health; however, you can typically substitute a healthier ingredient without sacrificing taste. Here are four tips to comfort your tummy while watching your fat intake.

1. When a recipe calls for heavy (whipping) cream, try substituting half-and-half or whole milk. This eliminates many unneeded calories without losing that rich, creamy taste and texture.

2. Many comfort foods include layers of melted cheese, which can be a calorie bomb. Try using part-skim cheeses, such as mozzarella or ricotta. They still melt well without a noticeable difference in taste.
3. One of the easiest ways to reduce your fat calorie intake is to choose grilled dishes over fried whenever possible. Sure that breading is tasty, but are the calories worth it?
4. Don’t forget that spices can also add a lot of flavor without adding fat. Look for recipes with spices that can add a little heat to your winter-warming recipes, such as cinnamon, cloves, cumin, or chili powder. ☐

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## SMART FACTS

**675**

Difference in calories between 1 cup of heavy whipping cream and 1 cup of whole milk.

**13**

Calories saved per ounce by using part-skim mozzarella instead of whole milk cheese.

**5-6%**

Percentage of total daily calories that saturated fat should comprise for a healthy heart.



# BEATING THE WINTER BLUES

by Laura Lubus, MPH

The winter blues are real, and many of us have experienced them. It's easy to feel down with short days, cold temperatures, and very little sunshine. These conditions can make it hard to get up in the morning and feel motivated; and they also have the tendency to encourage comfort food cravings. This is why gaining weight is a common side effect of the winter blues, as well as increased chances of longer spells of depression.

Oftentimes the winter blues are mistaken for seasonal affective disorder (SAD); however, not all winter blues are SAD even though they can have similar results. Nearly 11 million Americans suffer from SAD, while many more feel the blues. The difference between the two is in the severity of how it affects everyday life. For example, someone facing the blues just has a hard time getting out of bed in the morning (but eventually does), whereas someone with SAD cannot possibly make it to work on time.

So how can we shake the winter blues?

- **Prevent them.** It's better to beat something before it starts. You can prevent the blues by keeping your Vitamin D levels up. Even as the temperature drops, bundle up and get outside to get some sun on your face. You can also keep your body and mind sharp by maintaining a consistent workout routine, even though hibernation sounds nice.
- **Socialize.** Take opportunities to get out of the house and share conversation and laughter with friends. It distracts our minds from the cold temperature and lack of sunlight.
- **Light therapy.** Natural sunlight is the best option, so take advantage of the sun by soaking it in when you can; however, there are light boxes you can purchase to keep on your desk or at home that produce a similar type of light that can help provide a Vitamin D substitution.
- **Treat yourself to a massage.** Massage, saunas—whatever it is that makes you happy! Having some fun and treating yourself will help keep you chemically balanced.
- **Indulge (a little).** Eat a piece of chocolate or enjoy a glass of wine. You don't need to go overboard or sacrifice your New Year's resolutions, but be sure to add some "happy" into each day.

In the end, it's all about finding what makes you happy and doing it while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This can be harder to do in the winter with the blues, but that's when we need a healthy lifestyle the most. And don't forget, there is always Florida. ☺



Nearly 11 million Americans suffer from SAD, while many more feel the blues.





# HEART DISEASE: 3 THINGS TO WATCH

by Kaitlin Enneking

Heart disease is a general term used to describe a number of issues affecting the heart. Typically, these issues are a result of the plaque build-up on artery walls. When plaque builds up, it causes the artery walls to narrow, making it harder for blood to flow through. When evaluating your own risk for heart disease, keep these three things in mind:

**High Blood Pressure:** Blood pressure that is 140/90 or more is considered high. If untreated, high blood pressure damages and scars your arteries, increasing your risk for a heart attack. Narrowed artery walls can also increase your blood pressure.

**Cholesterol:** Cholesterol is a waxy substance that comes from your body and food. Your body makes all the cholesterol you need and circulates it through your blood; however, many of us also eat diets high in cholesterol from animal fats. This extra cholesterol is the plaque that sticks to your artery walls, creating build-up.

**Metabolic Syndrome:** The combination of factors that multiply or increase a person's risk for heart disease is called

## FINANCIAL CORNER WITH PETE THE PLANNER

The relationships in your life are important; especially the ones with a spouse or partner whom you share money with. Sharing money with someone is the ultimate form of trust. You work hard for the income you bring in and you have a lot of monetary needs to be met each month. This year, bring the focus back to your relationship by starting a monthly budget meeting. Instead of bringing up money when your partner isn't prepared for the discussion, plan a monthly meeting when all financial topics are discussed. In this meeting you will evaluate the past month and set goals for the upcoming month. Your ability to communicate with your partner is the best path to a great financial life in 2015. Set the date and time and don't ever miss a budget meeting again. You'll find this budget meeting will make your relationship stronger than ever. ♪

metabolic syndrome. You are considered to have metabolic syndrome when you have three or more of these:

- Belly fat: A waist of 35 inches or more for women and 40 inches or more for men
- Elevated triglyceride level of 150 or more
- Decreased HDL cholesterol
- Blood pressure greater than 130/85
- Fasting glucose (blood sugar) of 100 or more ♪



## AMERICAN HEART MONTH FEBRUARY

February is the one month a year we focus our attention to the leading cause of death in America: heart disease. In fact, one in four deaths are attributed to heart disease. This February, visit [mayoclinic.org/heart-disease-risk/itt-20084942](http://mayoclinic.org/heart-disease-risk/itt-20084942) and celebrate American Heart Month by assessing your risk.

# HARVEST OF THE MONTH: PARSNIPS

by Kelly Thomson, MSHP

The parsnip is a root vegetable closely related to the carrot family. They are known for having a sweet, rich flavor. This distinct flavor comes after the first frost when the vegetable is still in the ground, converting its starches into sugars. In fact, parsnips can be so sweet that before sugar was widely available they were used to sweeten jams and cakes. Parsnips are also a good source of fiber and potassium, and are low in calories.

## How to select

Choose a parsnip that is small to medium-sized that has beige skin. Although you can find them year-round, their peak season is from September to March. As with most vegetables, look for a parsnip that is blemish-free, firm, and has no discoloration.

## How to store

Like other root vegetables, parsnips store well. They will last the longest (up to two weeks) when stored in a zip-top bag in the crisper of your refrigerator.



## How to prepare

Wash the exterior of the vegetable and peel. Cut off the top and bottom, then follow your recipe's directions. Parsnips are delicious steamed, roasted, baked, or sautéed. ♪

Sources: WebMD. [webmd.com/diet/features/5-fun-facts-about-parsnips](http://webmd.com/diet/features/5-fun-facts-about-parsnips). Accessed 10 January 2015.

Cooking Light. [cookinglight.com/food/in-season/in-season-parsnips](http://cookinglight.com/food/in-season/in-season-parsnips). Accessed 10 January 2015.

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH:

### *Roasted Parsnips with Mint and Sage*

#### Ingredients

4 parsnips, peeled and cut into large sticks  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
2 cloves garlic minced  
1 Tablespoon honey  
¾ teaspoon kosher salt  
Ground black pepper (to taste)  
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh mint  
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh sage

Makes 4 servings

#### Nutritional Info

PER SERVING: 154 calories, 3.8g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 30.3g carbohydrates, 1.9g protein, 7g fiber, 375mg sodium

#### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.
2. Place the parsnips into a mixing bowl and toss with the olive oil. Sprinkle in the garlic, honey, salt, and black pepper to taste. Toss until evenly coated, and spread out evenly onto a baking sheet.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until the parsnips are tender, about 30 minutes. Scrape into a mixing bowl, and toss with the mint and sage.

Source: All Recipes. [allrecipes.com/Recipe/Roasted-Parsnips-with-Mint-and-Sage/Detail.aspx?evt19=1](http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Roasted-Parsnips-with-Mint-and-Sage/Detail.aspx?evt19=1). Accessed 10 January 2015.