



TAKE HOME HEALTH TIPS FOR WINTER

Winter is upon us and with it comes a whole other level of care we need to take for ourselves to ensure we don't end up home in bed with a nasty cold or flu.

The extra stress that cold weather places on our bodies can result in all sorts of symptoms and feelings and interestingly, there is actually a science behind it.

For the human body to function properly, the temperature of our vital organs, ie the heart, brain, kidneys, liver and lungs, need to remain at approximately 37°C. When the temperature outside our body drops, our body has to work harder to keep its own core temperature in the healthy range. This starts with vaso-constriction, a natural response from the hypothalamus to keep the blood nearest to our inner organs, hence why our extremities get cold first. After this we may experience goosebumps, another natural response from the body to stay insulated by the air closest to our skin.

Long periods of the body working to keep warm internally places stress on the organs and immune system leading to lack of focus, productivity, motivation and a drop in mood.

In a nut shell, feeling cold can prevent us from feeling good!

So here are some take home tips to combat this:

Take extra care with your food preparation making sure you consume lots of warm foods. It's good to know that meals that are well cooked require less work to break down on the inside, so the bodies organs can focus on other areas of function needed to cope with the seasonal changes. Incorporate a few spices into your cooking. Certain spices such as cumin, coriander, turmeric and black pepper are particularly warming to the blood and circulation and also stimulate digestion. This is great if the digestive system is a bit run down from the cold and not functioning as it normally would.

Physically keep your body warm - Whatever your fancy, winter woolies, heating, exercise, hot water bottles etc, make sure your body is warm and toasty to prevent any stress on your immune and endocrine systems.

Drink warm liquids such as homemade bone or vegetable broths, teas and light soups - these are immune building as well as warming from the inside out.

Eat lots of chilli - if you can handle it - chilli is a blood warmer and great for immunity also; and Try to incorporate exercise into your every day (even just a simple walk) as a commitment to keeping your circulation on track. Movement is a great way to stay warm inside.

Above all, enjoy looking after yourself and stay well this winter.

Image credit to Denise Evans ~ The 'Pink Ice' Hibiscus flower. Hibiscus tea is full of vitamin C and great for the immune system during winter.