

Baby, it's cold outside...and it's so tempting to stay inside, burrow under a blanket, and watch TV all day. It doesn't help that we have less exposure to the sun in the winter, which lowers serotonin levels and can cause depression and food cravings.

So how do you eat healthy and stay active when the thermometer is below freezing?

### Don't forget the veggies!

In the Summer months, we gravitate towards crisp salads with fresh fruits and vegetables. Once the winter hits, though, we might be more likely to order so-called "comfort food" that warms us up. Don't worry, though; there are creative ways of bulking up your diet with vegetables even when the temperatures are low:



- Erin Burch, an EAP affiliate nutritionist, recommends that you substitute vegetables for traditional carbohydrates. "Experiment by substituting spaghetti squash for pasta, or using yellow squash or zucchini instead of noodles in your soup."

- Although fresh fruit and vegetables can be limited in the winter, you can enjoy fantastic frozen options. Burch suggests you choose frozen vegetables without sauces and add them to casseroles or soups.

### Watch out for sugary drinks

Beware of your pumpkin spiced mocha double lattes with caramel swirls! Sweet hot drinks may warm you up, but their additional sugars and calories don't bring much, nutritionally, to the table. If you are a coffee drinker, you're not in the clear. Try to limit your cream and sugar—or, to get an antioxidant burst, drink some green tea instead.



### Get off the couch and explore Western New York!

Take advantage of all the fun outdoor activities that our region offers in the Winter. Get outside and have fun getting fit. These are just a some of the activities and events in February:

- Curling and Ice Bike Rentals at [Canalside](#): through February 25th
- Winter Wonderland in the Woods at [Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve](#): February 11th
- Tubing, sledding and much more at [Chestnut Ridge Park](#)
- Snowshoeing at the [Darwin Martin House](#): February 19th. There is also wonderful snowshoeing and hiking at [Tift Nature Preserve](#).

If you're stuck indoors, you can still be active. Burch recommends that, if you don't have a fitness regime, you can just [search YouTube](#) for a 20 minute workout—she recommends a high intensity interval training (HIIT) workout for beginners. Or just walk during the commercials of your favorite show. That's 15 minutes of activity for just a one-hour show!

**Need a nutrition refresher?** One of your EAP benefits allows you to meet with a nutritionist to learn how to live a healthier lifestyle, customized for your unique needs.