



health & wellbeing

winter warmers

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While it's tempting to enjoy more comfort food during winter, and want to curl up by the heater rather than face the cold weather, eating more and moving less means weight gain can be that much easier during the cooler months!

However, with a few smart food choices and the motivation to stay active, you can keep the extra kilos at bay this winter.

Choosing foods that fill you up and keep you going for longer can help reduce your food intake throughout the day therefore helping control your overall kilojoule intake.

Have you ever noticed the way foods like soups and stews, potatoes and veggies tend to fill you up fast? Or that a bowl of warm porridge keeps you going for longer? Or that hot drink can tide you over until your next meal?

Scientific research has identified foods with a high 'satiety index' (satiety being the feeling of fullness and reduction of hunger after a meal).

The most filling foods have been found to be those that are higher in protein, fibre or water content, or those you can eat in a larger portion size due to their low kilojoule value¹.

Foods that are higher in protein or fibre remain in the stomach for longer and are processed by the body more slowly, prolonging feelings of fullness. Protein rich foods include lean meat, chicken, eggs, legumes and nuts while high fibre foods include wholegrains, legumes, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables.



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Foods that contain a high proportion of water, like soups, fruit and vegetables, can be eaten in larger amounts because of their lower kilojoule value and the higher volume also helps satisfy hunger.

Interestingly, high fat processed snack foods have been shown to have a low satiety index, triggering hunger sooner.

So choosing filling foods and steering clear of processed snack foods is especially important during winter when activity levels often decrease while appetite increases!

Making small changes to your food intake can help keep you fuller for longer, so follow our guide for examples of some better choices:

Swap this . . .	With this . . .
regular sugary cereal	porridge made with skim milk, topped with brown sugar and dried apricot or banana and crushed walnuts
instant chicken noodle soup	canned or homemade vegetable or minestrone soup
cheese and tomato sandwich on white bread	green salad tossed with feta cheese, legumes and grilled chicken
creamy meat curry	stir-fried lean beef strips with chopped vegetables and brown rice



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Your overall daily energy (kilojoule) intake is also influenced by the portions of food you eat, so when it comes to warm, wintery comfort foods, try to keep the portion of pasta, rice, noodles or mash to one cup when cooked.

Light vegetables (all those except the starchy ones like potato, sweet potato and corn) are also a great addition to any meal to bulk them up without blowing out the kilojoule content!

By watching your food choices, portion sizes and including some high satiety foods this winter, you may just find you can face the warmer months a little leaner than you have in years before!

References:

1. Holt, S.H., Miller, J.C., Petocz, P. & Farmakalidis, E. A satiety index of common foods. *Eur J Clin Nutr* 49, 675-90 (1995).