

WINTER EATING TIPS

As the weather gets rainy and cold and we spend more time inside we often crave “comfort foods”. Since Remembrance Day my family has requested: chicken pot pie, hot chocolate (let us be honest, it was Rum & Eggnog) soup and grill cheese, mac and cheese, and chilli. Whether these cravings are memories from your childhood, or just hot, filling items there are ways to make them a little lighter in calories and calories from fat.

Chicken Pot Pie – Personally, the thought of all that pastry makes me feel like my arteries are clogging up before the first bite. All the yummy goodness is inside the “pie” but a simple fix is to make the ingredients in a casserole dish and place a thin layer of filo pastry, sprayed lightly with olive oil, between sheets, or if you must, regular pastry on the top. This will reduce the amount of pastry you consume by more than half.



Hot Chocolate or Rum & Eggnog – You can make homemade hot chocolate with cocoa and greatly reduce the sugar – here is your chance to use a milk alternative as well such as almond milk. You can cut the eggnog by mixing it with milk or water, fill a small glass with ice, and measure the rum to just 1 oz. There is a light eggnog available for purchase, but I find it is extremely sweet. Read the label – there are 120 calories in a half cup of regular eggnog and 10g of sugar! While hard liquor does not contain fat, it is full of sugar.

Soup & Grill Cheese – Can be a healthy option. Just chose to make a soup that is vegetable based and do not use any milk or butter in the recipe. Serve your soup pureed if you want it smooth and thick. Vegetables that are naturally sweet include: beets, red peppers, carrots, and tomatoes. No need to add any sugar but enjoy playing with a variety of spices. Open faced grilled cheese on healthy, high fibre bread can replace your standard grill cheese.

Chili – A pot of chili can be a fantastic, healthy comfort food. The trick is to use low fat protein and drain the fat, or you can make a vegetarian option. The problem child in most chili recipes is the “sauce” added. Ketchup (also tomato paste, tomato sauce and spaghetti sauce) can contain 200mg of sodium and 1 gram of sugar or more per tablespoon. And if you are like me and just substitute anything that seems close enough – BBQ sauce has 40 calories per tbls – 4x as much as the ketchup and 7g of sugar. While it is true that there are no calories in hot sauce, in just 1 Teaspoon (that is 1/3 of a tablespoon) there are 180mg of sodium. Try to use spices such as garlic, pepper, cayenne pepper etc, to ramp up the flavour rather than sauces from a bottle or a can.



Last tip – A little bit of anything in moderation is probably going to be fine, so enjoy a small portion with a side of salad or cut veggies.