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## of the best foods to boost your energy this winter

Find out how to stop feeling sluggish and more revitalised in the cooler months. By **Danielle Lett**

The start of the year always seems to drag, doesn't it? That January payday felt like an eternity away, evenings still get dark around 4pm, and it's generally a tiring time.

But did you know a few, simple dietary changes can help you feel revitalised, energised and overall a bit better?

Here to explain more is East Anglian registered nutritional therapist Emma Jamieson. An expert in gut health, she knows exactly what you need to stock your fridge and pantry with to help you feel better during these ongoing winter months.

"The winter months are typically the time of year when our ancestors would retreat inside, due to a combination of the shorter, darker days and cold weather. And I feel that a certain part of this remains with us today, despite having the benefits of heating and lights," she explains.

"In addition, there is simply not as much fresh produce available at this time of year. Of course, we also have the ability to enjoy fruit and vegetables grown overseas, but this is usually picked weeks in advance of it being on our supermarket shelves and can often lose its nutrients during this time."

We might find solace in carbs (they taste good, they're filling and they're comforting – what's not to love?) – but they tend to be counterproductive when looking for an energy boost, says Emma.

"While many people crave carbohydrate-rich foods in the winter, these can actually add to a feeling of sluggishness and fatigue. Instead build meals



Nutritional therapist Emma Jamieson  
Picture: REBECCA LEWIS,  
POSHYARNS PHOTOGRAPHY

around protein, healthy fats and carbohydrates from vegetables – but not potatoes.

"This could be soups made with seasonal vegetables, oven-roasts with vegetables and halloumi or chicken, or slow-cooked stews."

More specifically, B vitamins are key for energy, and there are a number of them which can be found in various foods.

B1, also known as thiamin, helps the body break down and release energy from food, as well as keep the nervous system healthy.



Thiamin comes from food sources, such as peas, some fresh fruits such as bananas and oranges, nuts, wholegrain breads, some fortified breakfast cereals, and liver.

Similarly, B2 (riboflavin) keeps the skin, eyes and nervous system healthy, and helps the body release energy from food.

Good sources of vitamin B2 include milk, eggs, fortified breakfast cereals, mushrooms, and plain yoghurt.

B6 – also known as pyridoxine – helps your body use and store

energy from protein and carbohydrates. It also helps the body form haemoglobin – the substance in red blood cells that carries oxygen around the body.

It can be found in a number of foods, including poultry, pork, fish, peanuts, soya beans, oats, wheatgerm, bananas, milk, and some fortified breakfast cereals.

B12 is another important vitamin worth increasing in your diet, as it makes red blood cells, releases energy from food, and keeps the nervous system healthy. A lack of this could lead to a

vitamin B12 deficiency anaemia. You can get B12 from most meats, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, and some fortified breakfast cereals.

"If you choose to use supplements, be sure to opt for a B vitamin complex or multi-vitamin as they work synergistically. And don't be alarmed by bright yellow urine – this is simply a side-effect of B12!"

As we're not as active as we usually are in the summer, there are a few foods we could do with swapping out for the time being, to help us combat that



B vitamins can be found in food such as meat, fish, dairy and some nuts

Picture: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

all-annoying energy slump.

"As I mentioned, carbohydrate-rich foods, while being comforting, can add to a sense of lethargy. However, I would also add that this is not the time of year for salads and smoothies. Work with your body to nourish it, while keeping meals light and easy to digest. Cutting out, or reducing, sugar can also help avoid the energy dip that comes after eating it," explains Emma.

And if you're one of the many people who rely on copious cups of coffee to get through the day –

you might actually be doing yourself more harm than good in the long run.

"Caffeine has been shown to have a half-life of five hours, meaning that half the amount of caffeine consumed is still in the bloodstream. If you're drinking coffee or tea in the afternoon or evening, this may directly impact sleep quality, so I would say swapping caffeinated drinks after midday for a herbal tea would directly benefit your energy levels."

Outside of food, there are also a

few lifestyle changes you can make to help boost your energy levels in the winter.

"These include getting outside in the daylight each day, which can help to lift the mood and reset our circadian rhythm. Try finding ways to reduce stress, and stay well hydrated as of the first signs of dehydration is tiredness. And finally, ensure you have a good night's sleep each night."

To find out more about Emma and the work she does, visit [emmajamieson.co.uk](http://emmajamieson.co.uk)

## we need a new home...

**Lilly and Poppy, female Rex rabbits, one and two years old**

Lilly and Poppy came into our care after they were removed from a property by one of our inspectors. Despite their bad start, they are a friendly pair of girls who seem to enjoy being in the company of people, especially Poppy, who will always come up to investigate whether you have any tasty snacks.

They are a well-bonded pair, who will need to be rehomed together. Lilly and Poppy are very close, and are always seen playing, grooming one another, sharing a tasty meal and them curling up for a nice nap together. Please note that we ask for an accommodation of at least 45 square



Lilly and Poppy need to be rehomed together

Picture: RSPCA SUFFOLK EAST & IPSWICH BRANCH

feet for a pair of rabbits.

If you think you can give them a home or any other pet in our care, then please get in contact with our reception

team by emailing reception.

[martlesham@rspca-ipswich.org.uk](mailto:martlesham@rspca-ipswich.org.uk) or by calling 0300 999 7321 between 9am-4pm and we will be happy to help.

## ask the vet

**Nina Downing, PDSA Veterinary Nurse**

*My two-year-old cat, Blossom, keeps peeing on the floor instead of using her litter tray. How can I train her to use it?*

This behaviour can be frustrating, but there is likely a reason Blossom is doing this, so try not to get cross with her, which can make things worse. Check the area around the litter tray to see if something is worrying her, such as neighbouring cats peering in if she is by a window or door – a covered litter tray, or moving the tray somewhere she feels safer, may help. Cats prefer to toilet somewhere clean, so scoop daily and add a second tray in a different place. You could also try different types of cat litter or a different style of tray. Speak to your vet if she continues as she may be feeling unwell.

*My dog, Riley, seems to get quite anxious when we leave the house, especially when there are unfamiliar people and dogs around. How can I make him feel more relaxed?*

Gentle handling and slow, steady exposure to new situations in a controlled way will help Riley become adjusted to the great outdoors. It's important he doesn't feel anxious or overwhelmed, so

plan your walks carefully and reward calm behaviour. Only once he feels confident in a situation can you start to build on his experiences and if he gets anxious just go back a step in his training, always supporting and staying calm. If Riley still seems worried, contact your vet or an accredited behaviorist who can provide professional help. For more advice on helping your dog cope with separation anxiety, you can visit [www.pdsa.org.uk/dogsandphobias](http://www.pdsa.org.uk/dogsandphobias)

*I've noticed my rabbit is losing patches of fur and their skin looks crusty. What could be causing this?*

From the symptoms you're describing, it sounds like your rabbit may be suffering with mites, so you should visit your vet as soon as possible for advice and treatment. Your vet may prescribe an anti-parasite treatment for all your rabbits as well as something to treat their living space. Just bear in mind that your rabbits may need more than one treatment to fully cure the problem. Also make sure you are extra cautious when handling your rabbits, as Cheyletiella mites, which this could be, can be passed on to humans.

**Vicki Larkham-Jones is a senior veterinary surgeon at the PDSA, answering questions on pet-related concerns**

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