

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

DECEMBER 2017
VOLUME 19 ISSUE 12

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A Mac and Cheese Makeover
Comfort Food Goes Healthy

Choosing the Right Milk
It's Not Just for Santa

Winter Wonderland
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On The Cover



Double trouble? No way! Leo and Alex did an amazing job! Their parents were shocked with how great these busy boys did at their photo shoot. Thanks to Little Labels for providing our props – the snowballs kept their attention!

Photographer
Photostylist

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Sabina Manji
Melissa Warkentin

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact us at 519.652.9226 or at editor@themomandcaregiver.com.

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Sabina Manji - Chief Editor

"ON THE FIRST DAY OF..." 🎵



"Your greatness is not what you have, but in what you give."

Alice Hocker

Holidays are a time of celebration, and we're so excited that our 19th year here at *The Mom & Caregiver* has been such an amazing one! So in the style of our favourite holiday tune, we challenge you to sing about "12 Wonderful Things that Happened to *The Mom & Caregiver* magazine in 2017."

On the first day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, A modern revamped look of the logo and magazine.

On the second day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, Full colour pages full of sheen.

On the third day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, A newly launched Instagram page – yippee!

On the fourth day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, Almost 7,000 Facebook fans – it's the place to be.

On the fifth day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, Frankly Fatherhood's point of view for all of us to see.

On the sixth day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, A magazine that is always still FREE.

On the seventh day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, Always gorgeous cover photos from One12 Photography.

On the eighth day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, Our calendar of events in the magazine and online for you to see.

On the ninth day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, Fun social media giveaways for she and he. (We've given away everything from Mother's and Father's Day giveaways to Budweiser Gardens events this year!)

On the tenth day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, Long-standing trusted advertisers thankfully!

On the eleventh day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, A Bad Moms movie contest full of glee!

On the twelfth day of this year, *The Mom & Caregiver* gave to me, New and exciting advertisers for you to see. (We're SO proud to welcome Nash Jewellers to *The Mom & Caregiver* family this month. You'll find them in our Biz Showcase celebrating 99 years in business. Only 79 more years to go here at *The Mom & Caregiver* to catch up!)

On the thirteenth day of this year, here's what YOU gave to me... A chance to make a difference in my community. (I'm so blessed to have a great team that helps me achieve this.)

From our family to yours, Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to you all – we can't do this without you, our fabulous readers. Also, a great big thank you goes out to our wonderful advertisers and writers. Stay tuned for a BIG year ahead, with exciting happenings to celebrate our 20th anniversary! 🎉



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DECEMBER EVENTS

12/2017

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

For More Details and Events Visit



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1
Lighting of the Lights
Victoria Park



2
Dec. 1-3
Christmas Craft
Festival
Western Fair District

3
Dec. 2, 3, 9, 10
A Visit with St.
Nicholas
Fanshawe Pioneer
Village

4
Dec. 1-31
Winter Wonderland
Victoria Park

5
Dec. 2-Jan. 1
Victorian Christmas
Eldon House

6
Grand Prix Euchre
Tournament
London Brewing
Co-operative

7
Dec. 7-10
A Really Retro
Crooner Christmas
Grand Theatre

8
Playgroup
LPL, Cherryhill

9
Argyle BIA Santa
Claus Parade



10
Encore 2017 Christ-
mas Concert
Banting Secondary
School

11
Storytime
LPL, Central

12
Early Years Play
London Children's
Museum

13
First Day of
Hannukah



14
Broadway in London
Cirque Musica Holi-
day Spectacular
Budweiser Gardens

15
Music for Young
Children
London Children's
Museum

16
Dec. 16-17
The Nutcracker
Palace Theatre

17
Kenny G - The
Miracles
Holiday Hits Tour
Centennial Hall

18
Storytime
LPL, Central

19
Beginning with Baby
LPL, Cherryhill

20
World Junior Cham-
pionship Pre-Tour-
nament Game
Canada vs. Czech
Republic
Budweiser Gardens

21
Playgroup
LPL, Beacock

22
London Lightning
Budweiser Gardens

23
Saturday Morning
Walk
North London
Athletic Fields

24
Imagination Station
Museum London

25
Christmas Day



26
Skating
Victoria Park

27
Playgroup
LPL, Byron

28
Nov. 28-Dec. 30
A Christmas Carol
Grand Theatre

29
London Lightning
Budweiser Gardens

30
Saturday Morning
Walk
Kilally Meadows

31
New Year's Eve
Hoopla
Storybook Gardens

"The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!"
- Buddy the Elf



Dec. 2, 3, 9, 10

A Visit with St. Nicholas
Fanshawe Pioneer Village

Dec. 1-31

Winter Wonderland
Victoria Park

December 31

New Year's Eve Hoopla
Storybook Garden

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THE MOM & CAREGIVER 5

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MILK

Your child's health depends on choosing the right milk. For a baby's first six months, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended as the sole source of nutrition. Breast milk is nutritionally complete and has antibodies to prevent and overcome infections.

Formula can be used when breast milk is not available. Babies cannot digest cow's milk as easily as breast milk or formula. A baby's kidneys have difficulty handling the high concentrations of protein and minerals in cow's milk. During your baby's first 12 months,

avoid cow's milk.

Baby formulas are formulated to be a nutritionally complete alternative to breast milk. Soy, rice or other plant beverages do not contain sufficient nutrients to substitute breast milk for a baby under 12 months. Most baby formulas are cow's milk-based, have extra iron necessary to boost an infant's iron reserve to prevent iron deficiency anemia and contain healthy fatty acids to support development for a baby's brain and eyes.

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Baby formulas come in many varieties, including hydrolyzed formulas that are predigested so larger proteins are broken down into smaller ones to help with digestion. Not all infants require hydrolyzed formulas. Some infants with cow's milk protein allergy, a condition where the body's immune system has an abnormal reaction against the protein in cow's milk, may require this type of formula. Soy-based formulas are best used in special circumstances, such as in a rare medical condition known as galactosemia, or when religious or cultural reasons require

avoiding dairy. The market is full of different formulas. Read labels carefully and, if in doubt, ask your doctor or pediatrician to know what's right for your baby.

After your baby's first year, whole cow's milk can be provided along with solid food. Limit milk to a maximum of 500 to 720 ml (16 to 24 ounces) to prevent displacing the intake of other nutritious foods and developing iron deficiency anemia. After two years, your child may have reduced-fat milk. Cow's milk alternatives (soy, rice or

almond milk) will provide less protein and calories. Overall, choosing the right milk depends on your child's age and tolerance. Ask your doctor or a dietitian. 🌱

Becky Biqi Chen was a resident in general pediatrics for three years at the Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre. She is currently specializing in pediatric gastroenterology during her fellowship at the British Columbia Children's Hospital.

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MAKE THE BEST OF SCREEN TIME

Our children are growing up in a digital world and are exposed to screens every day, but how is that impacting their ability to learn and socialize? Current research shows that excessive screen time can be damaging to the development of children's growing brains, however, there are many opportunities for screens to be excellent tools for learning. We know technology is here to stay so how do we make the best of screen time?

1. **Be present.** When children are using a tablet or other device, sit with them and ask them what they are playing or doing. Talking about what they are seeing not only gets them thinking about the activity in a more productive way, it also shows that you're interested in what they're interested in.

2. **Opportunities to transfer learning.** When using apps with children, take the learning piece that the app has provided and relate it to a physical object or real-life scenario. For example, if you are counting on the screen, follow up with a counting activity that provides the child an opportunity to touch or move something physical, taking it from 2D to 3D. At this point, there is no evidence that "swipe" and "touch" skills are transferable to writing.

3. **Keep screens out of the bedroom.** The importance of sleep cannot be over-emphasized. It's crucial to

a child's development. Children who view screens within two hours of bedtime are slower to reach the level of restorative sleep that they need to be successful the next day. Encourage reading instead. Bedtime is a great time to share a book together or even allow children to read on their own (print copy, of course). Television in the bedroom is also a known risk factor for obesity.

4. **Set the example.** The best teaching opportunity can come from leading by example. Taking the time to put down electronic devices supports social and emotional connections with those around us. In addition, when parents overuse screens, they could be encouraging an increase in negative behaviour from the child who is bidding for their attention.

5. **Moderation is key.** There are recommendations made by the Canadian Paediatric Society, in addition to the Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines, that indicate how much screen time is acceptable for children based on their age. Explore this information, and then make these decisions with moderation in mind.

For more examples on how screen time can be used in healthy ways, please visit www.thisisliteracy.ca.

By Jamie Fenton, Family Literacy Coordinator for the City of London's Child & Youth Network

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"...red bumpy eruptions that can occur anywhere on the body."



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Hives are very common. They are red bumpy eruptions that can occur anywhere on the body. When they occur on their own, they are annoying but not dangerous. Hives sometimes occur in association with other allergic symptoms like wheezing, difficulty breathing or swallowing, or swelling around the lips or eyes. When associated with these other symptoms, hives may be a sign of a more dangerous reaction known as anaphylaxis.

There are many causes for hives. They may be triggered by an allergy-causing substance such as a food. Nuts, eggs and shellfish are common triggers. Viral

infections and physical exposures, such as heat or cold, may be triggers too. A less common trigger is exercise. It's not always possible to determine the cause and allergy testing doesn't always help. A meticulous history of any new triggers in the two days before the onset of the rash can be helpful.

Antihistamines can reduce the itching and the appearance of the rash. Some non-drowsy alternatives are available over the counter. Calamine lotion or an oatmeal bath can help with the itching. Many episodes of hives will resolve on their own. If an allergic trigger is identified, it's best to avoid it.

If the rash persists, seek help and consider testing to help find a trigger.

Occasionally hives occur chronically without any explanation. With help from your physician and possibly consultation with an allergist, even these ornery chronic hives can be managed.



Dr. Bhooma Bhayana is a family physician in London and the mother of two young men and grandmother of one lovely princess! She continues to find wonder and enjoyment in family practice despite more than 30 years on the job!

...the hat
was mom's idea



Cynthia Bendle, BA
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Frankly Fatherhood

A Man's Point of View

IT'S FAMILY TIME



In the whirlwind of parenting young children, it seems that the holidays sneak up on me faster each year. As this year's festivities jump at me from around the already tinsel-decorated corner, I am making a conscious effort to pull back from the crazy hustle and bustle of the season and really try to enjoy my family time.

Each year the reason for the season has changed for me. From celebrating baby's first, to holidays down south and, in recent years, it's all been about experiencing it through the wonder-filled and excited eyes of my kids.

Earlier this year, both my father and father-in-law had some pretty severe health scares. Serious enough that I began thinking of our lives without them. I thought about how much my kids enjoyed time with their grandfathers and how unfair it was for those times to end so abruptly. I thought about how I would explain such immense loss to my four- and two-year-olds. I also thought about how holiday gatherings and traditions would feel without them.

Luckily, both men pulled through and are improving in health each day. Time spent together has a new and uplifting meaning for us... and especially for them. And, with Christmas coming, I can't help but assign this year a theme of immense gratitude for my family.

I will try my best to not stress over the "not-so-important" stuff of the holiday season. Meal planning, driving, wrapping up work, and gift shopping will need to take a back seat this year. I want to make more of an effort to be present with our kids, our parents, our friends and our family. In the end, no matter how you slice it, the holidays are supposed to be about gatherings, celebrations and the memories you make together. So however – and whomever with – you celebrate this year, make it a Happy Holiday! 🍷

Frank Emanuele is a proud father of two sons and special education teacher for the local public school board. When not parenting or educating, Frank enjoys cooking, photography, movies and video games.



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Why Does My Dentist Take My Blood Pressure?

Brushing Up

Tips for your Pearly Whites


When you go to the dentist, you may be surprised when they take your blood pressure reading. You'd expect this from your family doctor, but why is your dentist doing it? There are several reasons.

Dental anesthetics can have varying effects on each patient. Patients who are taking blood pressure medication may bleed more during procedures such as extractions, which can cause problems. Moreover, some local dental anesthetics contain epinephrine, a substance that's similar to adrenaline. When administered, it can increase the heart rate, which can be problematic for those with increased blood pressure.


High blood pressure can also be a symptom of conditions such as obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). If your dentist diagnoses you with uncontrolled hypertension, he or she may investigate further to determine whether you have OSA or other conditions.

Some high blood pressure medications can cause dental problems, too. Because some of these medications can decrease the flow of saliva in the mouth, causing dry mouth, people who take medications for hypertension can be at a higher risk for things like canker sores, bad breath, tooth decay and fungal infections. When the dentist and hygienist are aware that you're taking

medications that may cause these conditions, they can take additional preventative measures to combat them.

As you see, there are very good reasons why your dentist monitors your blood pressure. Be sure to keep them advised of any changes in your blood pressure and any medications you're taking for it so they can best manage your treatment. 

Dr. Sanjay Agrawal and his team strive to provide compassionate, comprehensive and comfortable dental care to all of their patients, especially the kids.



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Since 1918, Nash Jewellers has provided our customers with the ultimate jewellery experience. We're known for providing the highest level of personal service and uncompromising quality.

And, we're a family business with a long history in London. On June 13, 2016, we completed the construction of our new location and closed our downtown store of 98 years and our north-end store of 16 years.

A new chapter began!

After nearly 100 years downtown, it's amazing to be in the west end of the city. Be sure to stop by our new location at Oxford and Wonderland. We offer some of the world's best watch and jewellery brands and have a goldsmith on site who has modern technology, like laser welding, for repairs and custom work.

Our philosophy is simple – and it is one that's been shared by every generation of Nash from my great-grandfather until now. Have passion for what you do. Treat people with respect. And always try to go above and beyond the norm.

We are blessed with a staff who care about their friends and clients as much as we do, and have a pure passion for their career. Nash's employs only the most ethical, talented and dedicated individuals. We provide our employees with continuous training and support. Gemological study is required.

We also strive to develop close relationships with our manufacturers and suppliers, earning their loyalty, best effort and competitive value.

We love our work as we love making people happy. This career path is one of emotion and romance. We help people with some of the most important and sentimental moments in their lives and it's an honour to be a part of it.

We just celebrated our 99th anniversary. Next up: preparing for our 100th anniversary on Nov. 18, 2018!

We look forward to earning your patronage and trust. Stop by, call or visit us online.

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NASH JEWELLERS

This month, head to the granddaddy of all holiday light shows: The Winter Festival of Lights in Niagara Falls. Established in 1983, this festival grows each year to include new spectacles, including laser light shows at special times, from mid-November to the end of January.

Visit anytime from dusk to midnight and join the line of slow-moving cars weaving along the eight kilometres of illuminated Niagara Parkway. Start at Clifton Hill and head toward Dufferin Island. You'll pass the grand attraction: the Niagara Horseshoe Falls, once the star of this event. Yes, the colours projected on the cascading water are beautiful, but what's flanking you in and around the park distracts even more.

Almost every Victoria Park tree is laden with lights and illuminated cartoon characters fill the gaps between – all backlit by the giant glowing Clifton Hill Ferris Wheel.

Stop at the Floral Showcase. The indoor conservatory is open until 5 p.m. each day, but the outdoor gardens sport limbs of lights too. From the parking lot, you can see the musically choreographed projections on the Toronto Power Plant across the street.

Then follow the trail of cars and turn into the Grand Finale: The Niagara Falls Winter Wonderland at Dufferin Island. This is a semi-circle meandering drive through a showcase of lit shapes such as elk, moose, deer and strangely jumping monkeys. If there's one thing kids remember, it's those monkeys. (www.wfol.com) 🐒



Sherri Telenko is a freelance writer and blogger living in Southern Ontario. Sign up for travel and trail riding ideas at www.horsetrotting.net or follow her on twitter @SherriTelenko.

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Fostering Teens to Dream of a Happier Future

I began fostering for the Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex over 10 years ago and, for most of those years, I was fostering as a single parent. Fostering children is my way of giving back to the community. It's also my chance to provide children with a safe and nurturing environment when they need it most.

I initially began fostering young children, but soon realized the great need for family-based care for teenagers. There are often so few options for this age group and many end up in group homes. I've seen the impact that a positive, healthy and consistent home environment can have on the life of a teen. Although difficult at times, this responsibility has been tremendously rewarding. I enjoy being a positive mentor and role model in a young person's life. It brings me so much joy to see my youth evolve and develop into good citizens of our community. Most of the adolescents who live with me become involved in volunteering and giving back in some way.

I've had the privilege of seeing youth graduate from school, find employment and "break the cycle." These kids often just need someone to give them a chance and an opportunity to grow. I believe one reason families choose not to foster teenagers is be-

cause they fear the youth have done something to "land them in foster care" but, like most kids in the system, teens are typically in foster care due to neglect or abuse in their homes. I've learned that no matter how young or old a child is, all they want is someone to love, care and believe in them.

Many teens in London and area are facing tomorrow knowing they are completely alone. With acceptance and understanding, you can help change a teen's life by offering a loving, committed environment to live and grow – a home with patient people who care – and the freedom to dream of a happier future ... as ALL kids deserve. 🧡

Diana is a valuable member of the child welfare team. She is a strong advocate for the youth in her care, with a dedication that extends beyond when the youth leave her home. In addition to fostering, Diana contributes her time as a volunteer driver for the agency, transporting children to visits with birth family.

Foster and adoptive families are everyday people willing to open their homes and hearts to help children and young people in need. Be a part of our team. Contact us today at 519-455-9000 x2777, caslondon.on.ca, or find us on Facebook.



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During the holidays, many of us are full of joy, while others are overwhelmed by stress or sadness. The holidays are a mixed bag of emotions. Be mindful and allow yourself to prioritize self-care during this time of year.

Here are some ideas to help.

- Celebrate yourself and your family with quiet family time. Find downtime to reconnect with those you love.
- Monitor the amount of sugar, caffeine and alcohol you consume. Sugar overload and alcohol can make your interactions more stressful. Have a glass of water or non-alcoholic beverage between drinks. Try to eat healthy foods before a party so you don't fill up on fatty foods that stress your brain and body.
- Be active. Go for a walk at lunch. Go see the lights in Victoria Park with your kids. Try to incorporate a special activity that works with your lifestyle. Take micro breaks from life to rest your brain and heart.
- Appreciate people not things. Focus on quality time with the people who make you happy. Last-minute gift buying may offer

excitement but also causes stress. Balance your shopping with time with those who love you.

- Give yourself permission to say no. Talk to your spouse, partner and kids about what is important to them and come up with a family plan on what events are a priority. Maybe take turns attending to give the others in your house quiet time at home.

You cannot buy back family time you lose in 2017. Many things we cram into the holiday season can be done later. Focus on what's most important – the ones we love and the people who empower us to tackle 2018.

Thank you for trusting me with your souls in 2017. Wishing you and your family all the best in the New Year. 🍀

Emily Beeckmans is educated as a social worker and is a trauma specialist. As a private practitioner, she strives to educate clients and the public about the importance of emotional health and well-being. Emily offers you a safe place to dig into your thoughts, feelings and life choices.



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Pet Friendly

Making Your House A Home

The Holiday Hustle from a Pet Perspective



You may have heard of the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. Around this time of year, our clinic expects three similar visitors who remind us to see the holiday season through the perspective of others. However, unlike the characters from the classic story *A Christmas Carol*, our visitors come with four legs and a tail!

Lola, the Lab of Christmas Snacks

For Lola, December is filled with eye-level hors d'oeuvres, top-of-the-trash turkey bones, and friends who sneak her table scraps. She can't resist a holiday treat, so we usually see Lola in our clinic because of an upset tummy or foreign body removal. Lola likes food, but she hates getting sick. This year, she hopes her family stores toxic holiday items like chocolate, raisins, holly, and mistletoe where she's not tempted to snack.

Dodger, the Dog of Christmas Stress

Dodger loves company, but during social events he paces and pants. He doesn't know why the doorbell won't stop ringing or why Aunt Tanya stole his favourite chair. His tummy hurts from the anxiety, plus he missed his walk today, and sometimes that energy comes out as aggression. This year, he wishes his owners would change his schedule gradually before the holidays and give him lots of exercise so he can enjoy being with his visitors.

Cathy, the Cat of Christmas Sass

Cathy is less Jingle Bell Rock and more of a Silent Night kind of girl. When guests come over, her little cousins pull her tail and she can never find a place to hide. This makes her angry enough to become violent or even pee outside of the litter box! It's embarrassing, but it's how she signals that she needs help, and that's usually

why Cathy finds herself in our clinic. Try putting her litter box, food, water, and bed in a quiet place to proactively stop inappropriate urination and to help her relax by knowing she's safe.

You may have a Lola, Cathy, or Dodger at home. These friends understand that no one means to be a Scrooge, but they're hoping we'll pause to consider their perspective during our seasonal festivities. By taking the time to extend kindness and joy to our furry family members, we can all truly have happy holidays! 🐾

Dr. I. Wonder is here to answer your questions regarding your furry family members. If you have a question, email it to us at brent@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com.

Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your questions.



Give Yourself the Gift of Beauty and Wellness

Beauty and Wellness

Look and Feel Your Best

The holiday season is upon us and between the cooler temperatures and busy schedules, it's important to manage stress to keep both our immune systems and glam game strong. Here are a few tips to help you look and feel beautiful from the inside-out.

Sea salt baths: Destress, purify, brighten and cleanse in just 20 minutes with a beauty bath. Sea salt baths are very beneficial to support immune health, heal and rejuvenate skin, and help send stress down the drain – literally!

Get glowing: Give yourself an instant glow from head to toe with washable

bronzers. Bronzers are a perfect way to get body beautiful in no time, and camouflage fatigue and paleness. For a subtle effect, mix your bronzing cream into your favourite body moisturizer for an all over glisten.

Get moving: Whether you have 15 or 50 minutes available, dedicate time to work out every day. Exercise is an immediate mood and energy booster and will help you to stay fit and fabulous throughout the holiday season.

Lips and tips: This season it's all about bright and bold. A fabulous lip and nail colour can make you feel pretty and

polished in no time and add instant glamour to any occasion.

Give gratitude: Gratitude is the fastest way to find a sense of calm in the chaos, and immediately helps to shift our minds from stressed to blessed. Take a few minutes each day to give thanks for everything you have and put things back in a positive perspective.

Cheers to a happy and healthy holiday season! 🍷

Lisa Aquilina is a beauty and wellness professional who strives to help women take care of themselves and support their well-being.



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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Healthy Holiday Eating

Friends, family... FOOD! What's a holiday celebration without the latter?! December is one of the busiest times of the year. Conquer the holiday rush with a little meal planning and prep.

Holiday parties

It's a bad idea to grocery shop hungry. The same goes for attending holiday mixers! Reduce your chance of overeating by eating regularly during the day! And, eat a small, healthy snack an hour before you head out.

Keep your portions in check by using a smaller plate. If you drink alcohol, alternate with sparkling water with lime or club soda with a splash of juice.

Hostess with the mostest

Give veggies star power as side dishes! Serve roasted carrots and parsnips, baked acorn or butternut squash, or a spinach salad sprinkled with pomegranate seeds. For a healthy twist to your favourite mashed potatoes, try sweet potatoes instead. Swap in buttermilk or milk instead of butter and cream.

Serve small portions of decadent desserts and put out a decorative platter of seasonal fruit such as clementines, pomegranates, figs and pears.

Holidays = time with the fam

Connect as a family by creating new holiday food traditions. Cook a new recipe. Make festive food gifts using healthy ingredients, such as homemade soup mix. Layer dried lentils, herbs and spices in a jar and wrap with a bow.

Whether you're hosting a big holiday meal, or hopping from one party to the next, you can still take part in the festivities and keep your commitment to making the healthy choice the easy choice. 🍷



Jenn Giurgevich is a Registered Dietitian and contract Professor at Brescia University College with a wealth of nutrition knowledge. Over the last 10 years, Jenn has paired her love for nutrition and health with her undeniable love for fitness, working as both a personal trainer and a fitness instructor.



WHOLE HEALTH

A Mac and Cheese Makeover! Comfort Food Goes Healthy!

If the short days of winter have you dreaming of piping hot casseroles that the whole family loves, with no complaints – look no further. Macaroni and cheese is a classic favourite with a nourishing history traced back to England and Italy, and here in North America, where it helped to sustain families through the tough times of depression and war. As of late, it has been re-invented in many hip and clever ways, such as mixed with lobster or bacon, served Korean barbecue-style or even fried.

But, let's face it. Plain old mac and cheese is absolutely delectable even when it's not all dolled up and fancy. And it can taste just like the classic cheesy version, but with healthy ingredients. This casserole allows you to maximize the rich nutritional offerings of cauliflower and sweet potato, including fibre, omega-3 fatty acids, protein and vitamin A, B6, C, K, folate, copper and manganese in an undeniably, universally delicious dish.



So, let the cauliflower craze continue, since there is no guilt when indulging in vegetables. Keeping the classic mac and cheese taste in mind, this tender-crisp cauliflower is baked in a thick and creamy cheese and sweet potato sauce, topped with a tasty, crunchy pecan topping.

Cheesy Cauliflower and Sweet Potato Bake

Serves 4 to 6

1 head	cauliflower, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 cup	shredded aged Cheddar cheese
1½ cups	cooked and mashed sweet potato
1 cup	milk or non-dairy milk
¼ cup	rice flour
½ tsp	ground mustard
½ tsp	salt
¼ tsp	ground black pepper
Dash	hot sauce (optional)
½ cup	fine dry bread crumbs
2 Tbsp	finely chopped pecans
1 Tbsp	salted butter, melted

Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease six 2-cup ovenproof bowls or a 9-inch square glass baking dish. Set aside.

Place the cauliflower pieces and cheese in a large bowl and set aside. Purée the sweet potato, milk, flour, mustard, salt, black pepper and hot sauce (if using) in a blender. Pour over the cauliflower and cheese. Fold until cauliflower is fully coated. Evenly divide between the ovenproof bowls or spread in the baking dish.

Mix breadcrumbs, pecan pieces and butter in a small bowl. Sprinkle over the cauliflower mixture, and bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until the cauliflower is tender, the sauce is thick and bubbling, and the bread-crumbs topping is golden. Remove from the oven and let rest 5 minutes before serving. 🍴

Recipe from: *Vegetarian Any Day* (Penguin Random House)
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Carolyn Hemming (and co-author, Patricia Green) are the authors of seven bestselling cookbooks in three languages with easy recipes and accessible ingredients. Carolyn is an active mother and businesswoman who lives with her family in London.



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