

Mayo Clinic Minute: Healthy winter foods

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Summer vegetables gardens have been long put to bed, and winter fruits and vegetables are now on the menu. Elizabeth J. Bailey, a Mayo Clinic registered dietitian nutritionist, says that traditional winter vegetables can be satisfying and healthy.

Winter brings [cooler temperatures](#)—sometimes downright cold temperatures. A crisp cool salad might be what the doctor ordered, but there are also other healthy options.

"As the weather gets colder, something that I like to incorporate more are soups," says Bailey.

She says soups like kale with white beans or butternut squash can be fulfilling and healthy.

"Kale is rich in vitamin A. You've got your antioxidants from that."

Antioxidants are important because they may protect our cells against the effects of free radicals, which may play a role in [heart disease](#), cancer and other diseases. Another benefit?

"Vitamin A is beneficial for [immune function](#), and it's especially important when it comes to vision," says Bailey.

And white beans are legumes, which contain [dietary fiber](#).

"For heart health, for brain health, fiber is the key takeaway. Fiber is extremely important and falls into improvements in other areas of our health, as well," she says.

Bailey says to aim for at least 25 grams of fiber per day.

"If somebody is currently only consuming on average 5 grams of fiber today, we would recommend increasing that fiber intake gradually and slowly to ensure tolerance."

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