



Food and nutrition with naturopath **SOPHIE ATKIN**
North East Natural Health Centre



**PUMPKIN,
LEEK AND
ZUCCHINI QUICHE**

Ingredients

- 700 g butternut pumpkin, peeled, cut into 2 cm pieces.
- ProChef Olive Oil Spray.
- 1 leek, pale section only, halved lengthways, washed, dried, thinly sliced crossways.
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed.
- 100 g baby spinach leaves.
- 4 eggs.
- 2 egg whites.
- 60 ml (¼ cup) skim milk.
- 80 g (cup) fresh low-fat ricotta.
- One-third cup fresh basil leaves.
- Mixed salad leaves (optional), to serve.

Method

- Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a large baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Place the pumpkin on the lined tray and spray with olive oil spray. Season with pepper. Bake in oven for 25 minutes or until golden.
- Meanwhile, heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Spray lightly with olive oil to grease. Add the leek and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until soft. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute or until soft. Add the spinach and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until the spinach just wilts.
- Line a 26 x 16 cm (base measurement) slab pan with non-stick baking paper. Spread the pumpkin and leek mixture evenly over the base of the pan.
- Whisk together the eggs, egg whites and milk in a jug. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the pumpkin and leek mixture. Sprinkle evenly with ricotta. Bake for 20 minutes or until puffed and golden. Sprinkle with basil. Serve with mixed salad leaves, if desired.

It's the end of daylight savings. Sigh!

After we got our extra hour sleep in on Sunday, it really feels like autumn is here.

It's that little bit harder to bounce out of bed and that little bit colder and darker when you finish work at the end of the day.

Transitioning through the seasons can be tough if you don't prepare, and I am already starting to see patients presenting with cold and flu symptoms.

The coldness in the air and less light influences our energy, sleep, mood and immune system. You may have noticed that your sinus and glands are a little more clogged, your digestion and metabolism slowing down a notch and perhaps you're craving more of those stodgy, warm meals.

Here are some tips to transition through summer into autumn with a bit more oomph and a spring in your step. Each of these tips will give you some immune protection, but it is best if you regularly combine all four.

Sunshine breaks:

- Make time for 20-30 minutes in direct sunlight daily over autumn to stimulate your immune system, warm your soul and put a peaceful smile on your dial. Our ability to absorb Vitamin D in winter is lower, so you need to make the most of your time in the crisp fresh air over the next few months of autumn. If you work nine to five, walk or ride to work and eat lunch outside. Once it gets really cold, just go for a brisk walk around the block, after eating your lunch.

Water:

- As the air cools down you will naturally feel less thirsty and perhaps less like drinking cold plain water. One of the main reasons we get

more infections this time of year is that the dry cold winds and less time outdoors dry us out. This in turn makes it more difficult for our lymphatic system to clear out toxins and bugs. So keep topping up your water intake — drink it warm, hot, as herbal teas, with added cinnamon and honey, whatever it takes.

Vitamin C:

- In autumn and winter, we naturally gravitate towards well-cooked stews, casseroles, soups and other warm cooked meals. This is important as these meals warm us up, but it also means that we eat less vitamin C. There are high amounts of vitamin C in most fruit

and veg, however cold days mean we crave less fresh fruit and cooking our vegetables destroys the vitamin C content. Boost vitamin C with a glass of fresh OJ, lemon water and garnish meals with fresh parsley and coriander. Leave the pith on citrus fruit to increase vitamin C and talk to your health professional about a supplement if you are still struggling with pre-winter colds and infections.

Walking:

- A daily walk or more intense exercise if you're up for it will keep your immune system bouncing and mood sunny. Walking clears the mind and moves toxins and bugs through your system.

