



# Winter Comfort System HEALTH TIPS

In addition to a healthy diet and regular exercise, your environment affects your health. Your HVAC system is a critical component of your home's environment. Here are five ways to optimize it for better health.

## CONTROL HUMIDITY

During winter, low humidity causes more than cracked skin. Your dried nose and throat can make you susceptible to colds. Installing a humidifier will

address this but you need to ensure that you don't over humidify your home and end up an environment that's perfect for mold and pathogens to grow. Talk to a professional about the right humidity control for your home.

## KEEP THE TEMP. RIGHT

In your attempts to save energy, lowering your home's setpoint may seem like a viable option. Just be careful not to lower it too much. Conversely, keeping the temperature too high affects your health as well as your pocket-book. Your ideal temperature varies from day (with ongoing activity at home) to night (lower temperatures improve sleep quality). A programmable thermostat will help keep your temperature just right throughout the day while a well-balanced air system will keep the temperature consistent throughout your home.

## ADEQUATE VENTILATION

Don't underestimate the importance of replacing stale, moist indoor air with fresh air from outside. Exhausting moist bathroom and kitchen air will reduce

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humidity issues, not only in these areas but throughout your house. Introducing fresh air prevents the buildup of carbon dioxide and other gases, some of which can cause long term health issues and are downright toxic. Installing an energy recovery ventilation system gives you the benefit of healthy, fresh air without the cost of higher energy consumption.

## REMOVE ALLERGENS

Ventilation is a first step in reducing the allergens in your home. The right filtration for your furnace is another way to further limit the growth and buildup of mites, dust and other allergens. An air purifier will take your air quality to the next level as you further remove pathogens and other invisible enemies to your health.

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## Winter Comfort System HEALTH TIPS

### ELIMINATE DRAFTS

As part of maintaining your home's temperature, keeping it consistent throughout requires eliminating cold spots. This could involve upgrading your furnace to produce even more heat, sealing windows and doors or balancing air distribution. Consult a professional about the best option for your situation to keep your home's heat exactly where it needs to be.

If you're concerned about your HVAC system's ability to keep you and your family healthy this winter, give us a call.



# TIC-TAC-TOE

Take turns using Xs and Os to get three in a row



## Tips for Staying Positive DURING STRESSFUL TIMES

In the midst of dark times, it's sometimes impossible to imagine that the light will return. But just as the darkest night gives way to dawn and winter gives way to spring, these days will pass.

While you're facing what feels like an onslaught of bad news, on top of your own challenges, here are some ways to stay positive.

### COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

You may be faced with challenges now, new challenges and ones you couldn't anticipate a few months ago. Take the time daily to purposely think about your blessings. Whether it's food on your table or an active toddler's spontaneous dance, pay attention. Better yet, write it down. It may not change

the circumstances but it certainly makes the journey easier.

### FAST FROM NEWS

Like junk food, too much information can be detrimental to your health. Take in just enough so you're not completely in the dark but know your limits. When you start losing sleep over events you can't control, that's a sign to dial back the news consumption. If you get easily obsessed, take a break for a few days before letting the world back in.

### IGNORE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is addictive and comes with the burden of too many negative interactions and angry "discussions." For your own sake, shut it down for a week, a month or longer. You know your personal limits to make this decision.



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***Tips for Staying Positive  
DURING STRESSFUL TIMES***

**PLAY**

Playing isn't just reserved for our kids. It will benefit you to be focused on something other than everyday responsibilities

and tasks. Spend time having fun with your kids or pets and learn how to live in the moment and experience joy.

**STAY BUSY**

Keep your mind occupied just enough to prevent you from ruminating on the world's issues but be careful not to use it as a way to avoid dealing with challenges. Spend time working on a previously

ignored goal, learning something new or helping some in need. This last one will do wonders for your mood in addition to bringing light to someone in darkness.

**TAKE CARE OF THE BASICS**

Eat right, get enough sleep and take care of your body so your mind can deal with any issues that may arise. Solving problems while you're groggy from a lack of sleep or sluggish from watching too much TV is more difficult than after a healthy meal and a nap. Pray and meditate for your spiritual health and you'll find yourself less stressed overall.

Remember that no matter what happens, this too shall pass. Have the faith that you can endure the trials that come and stay strong, even when things get stressful.

**JOKE  
TIME!**

**What do snowmen call  
their kids?**  
*Chill-dren!*

**What do you call a  
reindeer with no eyes?**  
*I have no eye deer.*

**Today isn't the day to be  
making jokes about the  
weather.**  
*It's snow joke.*



# SHEPHERD'S PIE

## FOR POTATOES

1 1/2 lb. potatoes, peeled  
Salt to taste  
4 tbsp. melted butter  
1/4 c. milk  
1/4 c. sour cream  
Freshly ground black pepper

## FOR BEEF MIXTURE

1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 carrots, peeled and chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tsp. fresh thyme  
1 1/2 lb. ground beef  
1 c. frozen peas  
1 c. frozen corn  
2 tbsp. all-purpose flour  
2/3 c. low-sodium chicken broth  
1 tbsp. freshly chopped parsley, for garnish

## INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°F. Make mashed potatoes: In a large pot, cover potatoes with water and add a generous pinch of salt. Bring to a boil and cook until totally soft, 16 to 18 minutes. Drain and return to pot.

Use a potato masher to mash potatoes until smooth. Add melted butter, milk, and sour cream. Mash together until fully incorporated, then season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Make beef mixture: In a large, ovenproof skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion, carrots, garlic, and thyme and cook until fragrant and softened, 5 minutes. Add ground beef and cook until no longer pink, 5 minutes more. Drain fat.

Stir in frozen peas and corn and cook until warmed through, 3 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper.

Sprinkle meat with flour and stir to evenly distribute. Cook 1 minute more and add chicken broth. Bring to a simmer and let mixture thicken slightly, 5 minutes.

Top beef mixture with an even layer of mashed potatoes and bake until there is very little liquid visible and mashed potatoes are golden, about 20 minutes. Broil if desired. Garnish with parsley before serving.

