



WINTER HAPPENINGS

at the UPMC Western Maryland Wellness Center

Call **240-964-8424** or email leesm9@upmc.edu to register.

RESISTANCE BAND CLASSES

provide participants with the ability to build strength, increase bone density, and decrease arthritis pain, all in one. Classes are suitable for all fitness levels. Bring a mat, water, and a friend! Classes are held at Frostburg Library (65 East Main Street) every Monday from 1:30 to 2:00 p.m. Walk-in registrations welcome.

FREE YOGA CLASSES at your local libraries!

Wednesdays at 11 a.m. at the South Cumberland Library and **Friday's at 10:30 a.m.** at the LaVale Library. Join this beginner-friendly class to experience how gentle stretching and mindful breathing can make you feel better fast!

SMART RECOVERY

Every Thursday from noon-1 p.m. online

This is a SELF-EMPOWERING addiction recovery support group. SMART Recovery can help people recover from all types of addiction and addictive behaviors, including alcoholism, drug abuse, drug addiction, substance and alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, and food addiction. This is not a spiritual-based program but a self-empowering, abstinence-based, self-help support group for both men and women. For more information, please contact Carey Moffatt at moffattcl@upmc.edu or call 240-962-8418.

BUILDING BETTER CAREGIVERS

7-week course for caregivers of a loved one with dementia, PTSD, brain-related injury, and more. Registration is ongoing. Please contact us for more details.

CHAIR YOGA is offered by UPMC Western Maryland every Monday at the Gilchrist Museum of the Arts at 104 Washington Street, Cumberland, MD 21502, at 2:30 PM. Please register to attend in person or online via ZOOM by contacting Christina Collins-Smith at collinssmithcd@upmc.edu.

HEALTH COACHING

Have you tried to make changes to your lifestyle only to find yourself falling back into the same routine and/or not-so-healthy habits? A certified health coach can help! Health coaching services are free.

Activities and events are always being added - for an up-to-date listing, contact the UPMC Western Maryland Wellness Center at 240-964-8424.



WINTER IS HERE!



Stacey Blank, MS, BTPS RRT, Manager, UPMC Community Health and Wellness

After one of the hottest summers on record, where the heat lasted well into fall, the *Old Farmer's Almanac* predicts a colder, snowy winter. In our region, that means plenty of time for cold-weather activities like sledding, ice skating, skiing, and snowboarding! In my opinion, there is nothing quite like a fresh snowfall and the quiet it brings for the first couple of hours until the telltale sounds of shoveling and snowplows replace the silence. The contrast between the leafless trees, evergreens, and bright white snow are some of my favorite things about winter... add a beautiful cardinal, and it feels like a scene right out of a holiday film. Beauty is everywhere if you just look for it!

Along with the crisp winter air and short daylight hours comes increased time spent indoors. Remember to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer regularly to help decrease the transmission of germs. Turning up the thermostat as the temps drop usually results in the indoor air being dryer and less humid, so be sure to drink water, apply lotion, and use your lip balm. Be sure to make those regularly

scheduled wellness visits to your provider; it is vitally important to your overall health and well-being. Ensure you are taking your medications as prescribed, eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and managing your stress. If you are struggling with any of these, seek help from the professionals who make up your healthcare team: a provider, dietitian, pharmacist, community health worker, or health coach.

Whatever you do, no hibernating! Staying active is more difficult for some during frosty weather. Bundle up and go for a walk with family or friends, visit your local library, or find ways to be active inside your home. If you are unsure what to do, contact one of our health coaches, who can help guide your individualized indoor exercise plan. You don't have to own expensive gym equipment to get the health benefits of exercise.

Make health a habit; choose one thing you would like to change this winter in your journey to a healthier you!

Stacey



SAFETY FIRST

Susan Lee, Administrative Assistant

Winter Weather Driving Tips

Snow can bring beautiful winter scenery and fun for kids, but driving conditions can be treacherous. Have your vehicle serviced to prepare for cold weather, and remember these tips, courtesy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

Excessive clutter may do more than just pose a physical risk. According to Psychology Today online*, clutter can impact mental health, contributing to depression, anxiety, and stress. Decluttering improves your mood and allows for better time management – and who couldn't use more time these days?

- ⚠ When winter weather dumps snow, sleet, or freezing rain on our roadways, stay off the roads if possible.
- ⚠ If you must drive, clean snow and ice from your vehicle; don't forget the roof of your vehicle, side-view mirrors, and your headlights and taillights.
- ⚠ **SLOW DOWN.** Increase your following distance so you'll have time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.
- ⚠ Every occupant of the vehicle should be wearing seat belts; children should be in age and size-appropriate child seats.
- ⚠ Make sure your vehicle is stocked with emergency supplies, such as battery cables, flares or emergency lights, blankets, shovels, boots, water, flashlight, etc. Even if you don't need them, you might be able to help someone else who does.



According to the NHTSA, 119,000 police-reported crashes occurred in 2020, resulting from driving in wintry conditions. Don't become a statistic, and stay safe this winter season.

For more information on winter driving safety, check out <https://www.nhtsa.gov/winter-driving-tips>.



EXERCISE THROUGH THE WINTER

Michael Browning, MA, NBC-HWC



As I am currently writing this article, my mind is fully aware of the impending dark, which begins November 5th of this year, and as you are reading this, we are all now facing that dark. Luckily, I have my training as a wellness expert on my side to combat the lack of light. The keepers of Daylight Saving Time, as dark as their souls are, know how to incorporate positive thinking. Notice they have not properly changed the name to “unnecessary taking of the light time” or “go to work in the dark and come home in the dark time.” There is one more extremely powerful tool to consider when combating dark and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and that is EXERCISE. No acronym, all caps for proper emphasis of power!

SAD is a serious mental health concern as it can lead to Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and all the comorbidities of depression, such as increased anxiety, obesity, and thoughts of suicide, to name a few. Many of the causes of SAD are based on the loss of sun exposure. These include less serotonin in the brain, which regulates mood and feelings of happiness. Lack of vitamin D, which also reduces serotonin, and overproduction of

melatonin can make you feel sluggish. You are at a much higher risk of developing SAD if you have other mood disorders, such as MDD and Bipolar Disorder. You are also at higher risk if you are female.

If SAD has been present in your past, or if you are at risk for developing SAD, there are effective treatments to consider.

- ✳ Light therapy is an effective treatment that involves using a special lamp with UV rays, but it is important to note that tanning beds are not an effective form of light therapy.
- ✳ Cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, is a type of talk therapy with a licensed mental health professional that has been shown to have long-lasting effects against all forms of depression.
- ✳ Antidepressant medications may also be a consideration to discuss with your doctor.
- ✳ Spending time outdoors when sunlight is present can be extremely effective, but make sure to try and expose as much skin as possible for at least 30 minutes.
- ✳ Vitamin D supplementation may be necessary if you don't get enough in your normal diet.

Finally, here are some tips for exercising during the winter to avoid SAD and MDD.

- ✳ Exercise in the light. If you work out from home, make sure to do so in a well naturally lit room, not in the basement dungeon of despair.
- ✳ Go outdoors for exercise as much as possible. Luckily, in Allegany County, we still have some bright, warmer days throughout the winter to go for a walk, so take advantage of them.
- ✳ Work out with a partner or join a gym if you are missing summer social events.
- ✳ Keep it simple and daily; just ten minutes a day of exercise can improve your health and mental well-being.
- ✳ On days when you can do more, go for it.

If you need more tips or want to know where to begin, reach out to us at Community Health and Wellness at UPMC Western Maryland, 240-964-8420. We can help you for free!

Resources used in this article:

[Seasonal Depression \(Seasonal Affective Disorder\) \(clevelandclinic.org\)](https://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/condition/seasonal-depression),
[Physical Exercise for Treatment of Mood Disorders: A Critical Review - PMC \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31111111/)



Pam Jan,
NBC-HWC

TAKE ACTION & UNLOCK YOUR BEST LIFE



The “New Year” is creeping in, and 2023 will soon be behind us. Yes, we will soon be basking in the afterglow of the holidays, wondering where time has gone, and approximately 45% of us will be striving to keep our fresh, off-the-press New Year’s resolutions. Whether lack of willpower or unrealistic goals are to blame, most people have difficulty making their resolutions stick. In fact, just 8% of those who make them will still be committed by the end of 2024.



Are you among the 92% who never quite get around to seeing their resolutions through? An action board may be the key to harnessing the power to manifest your goals. The purpose of an action board is to prime your brain to become more aware of the things you seek, making you better prepared to recognize and seize opportunities when they come your way. Plus, they define actions you will take to manifest what you want.

If you are looking for a new way to manifest your desires in 2024, try an action board. Tara Swart’s book *The Source* explains that using the science of how the brain works to make your dreams come true can work. She states, “If you create an action board, look at it daily and visualize it coming true, this tracks images to your subconscious and primes your brain to grasp opportunities that may otherwise have passed you by. Add in doing something each day, no matter how small, to move you towards your goal, and you’ll be transforming abundance thinking into reality.” Take these steps now and make 2024 your best year yet!

- 1. Get clear on your goals for 2024.** An action board is meant to encompass your goals for about a year’s time frame. This helps focus your mind on small, attainable goals. You can create separate action boards for different areas of your life (business, family, and personal), or you can include all images on one board.
- 2. Gather your materials.** While you’re getting clear on your vision, begin searching through magazines or online for pictures that align with your goals. They don’t have to be exact representations, but they should mean something to you and trigger some sort of emotion that puts your body into a state of positivity and transcends the desire for your dream life.

3. Create your action board. Once you have your stack of images, define an action you will take for each. Then, it’s time to arrange them. You can use a poster board or a piece of paper; it doesn’t matter; just be intentional with the placement. Group related images and separate but interconnected areas of your life together. Trust your gut and turn inward to organize your board in a way that feels good and makes sense to you.

4. Review and refine the placement of images. After you finish assembling your images, pause and take a step back. Make any necessary changes to ensure it represents your intentions. When you’re ready, glue the images on your board.

5. Place your action board somewhere you’ll see it daily. Looking at it before you go to bed is helpful because your brain is super impressionable during this time, and it can tap into what’s known as the Tetris effect. (Yes, like the old-school game Tetris!)

The Tetris effect is a phenomenon that Dr. Swart describes in her book that’s quite fascinating. It’s when you invest so much time and energy into something that it begins to pattern your thoughts and dreams and imprints your subconscious with the things to look out for during the day that you want to attract in your life.

You can also take a picture of your action board and set it as the wallpaper or lock screen on your phone, where you’ll see it often!

I wish you the best in 2024!

SELF-CARE

with **HEALTH COACH CAREY MOFFATT, MS, NBC-HWC**

Exploring Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)



Life can be overwhelming at times. Amid the challenges we face, it is important to have tools to help us regain balance and prioritize our health. WRAP can serve as a compass in navigating the rollercoaster of life's unpredictable journey. WRAP is a self-designed and self-empowering prevention and wellness process developed by Mary Ellen Copeland. WRAP is commonly associated with mental health disorders, but it can be adapted and used for other dimensions of wellness. Here, we will explore how WRAP can help you tackle stress and promote a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

Using WRAP for Stress and Wellness:

- 1. Developing a Wellness Toolbox:** Compile a list of personalized coping skills, resources, and activities that help you manage stress. This can include techniques like deep breathing exercises, mindfulness, journaling, and hobbies that provide relaxation.
- 2. Creating a Daily Maintenance Plan:** This plan incorporates activities that promote overall well-being, such as adequate sleep, a balanced diet, and movement.
- 3. Identifying Early Warning Signs:** This step encourages self-awareness of early warning signs of stress, such as sleep disturbances, irritability, and difficulty concentrating.
- 4. Identifying Stress Triggers:** Triggers can be anything from work deadlines, family responsibilities, and financial difficulties.
- 5. Crisis Planning:** Even with preventive measures in place, unexpected stressors can arise. A crisis plan helps address these situations. The crisis plan may include seeking support from loved ones and setting boundaries when encountering overwhelming stress.

Incorporating WRAP into your life can be a powerful way to manage stress and enhance overall wellness. By identifying triggers, recognizing early warning signs, and creating a personalized wellness plan, you can take charge of your health journey. WRAP is a reminder that we have the power to shape our future.

Resource:

Wellness Recovery Action Plan by Dr. Mary Ellen Copeland

GET AHEAD OF THE GERMS!



Brittany Friend,
MS, NBC-HWC



Winter is coming, which means all the germs are too. It can be hard to stay positive when your kiddos seem to catch every bug their peers share with them, but know there are some great things you can do to try and support their immune systems and your own!

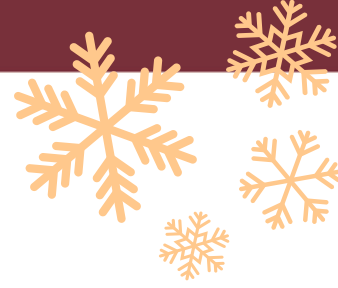
- 1. Eat the good stuff.** Choose fruits and vegetables that contain higher levels of vitamin C, such as oranges, strawberries, raspberries, and red bell peppers. Vitamin C has great immune-boosting properties. Low-sugar yogurts marked with "live and active cultures" have great probiotics that will help the digestive system and keep it free from the bad germs we don't want floating around in there. Broccoli is packed with vitamins A, C, and E, as well as other antioxidants. Raw is best to keep those vitamins the strongest. If you don't like raw broccoli, try them steamed. There are so many good whole foods that are packed full of vitamins and nutrients to help us survive germ season.
- 2. Reduce the sugar.** I know, I know. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day... winter is full of all the sugary holidays. However, excess sugar can cause inflammation in the body, which can leave kids more susceptible to illnesses as it depresses their immune system. Limit the intake as much as possible.
- 3. Stay hydrated.** Many people find it hard to stay hydrated in the winter, as they are not as active were during the warmer months. However, water is a key player in removing toxins from the system. Also, a great suggestion for school is to skip the water fountain and take a water bottle if your school allows. Water fountains can harbor bacteria, especially if kids have put their mouths on the spouts, but also by hands touching the fountain to turn it on. Here's a great link and infographic for more information: <https://www.childrens.com/health-wellness/hydration-tip-for-your-childs-health-infographic>
- 4. More sleep!** Sleep does more than just help us function every day. It regulates hormones and keeps our immune systems functioning optimally. Different ages need different amounts of sleep. Be sure your kiddo is getting the rest they need for their brains in school, as well as their immune systems, to protect their bodies.
- 5. Stress less!** Kids are always on overdrive with activities and school. Then, add in the holiday rush over the winter months, and this is amplified. They can read a book, listen to music, practice yoga or gentle stretching, or listen to calming music. Less stress equals a better immune system.
- 6. Practice good hygiene.** Teach kids how to properly wash their hands before eating, after eating, after using the bathroom, after being in a store, and after sneezing or coughing. Anywhere where there may have been an influx of germs, wash those hands! Another great thing to do is to change toothbrushes often, especially after a child is sick, and if the toothbrushes are in proximity to other siblings' toothbrushes. Discard and start fresh! Lastly, teach good cough and sneeze etiquette. Cough and sneeze germs can stay contained the best if a child can cough or sneeze into the inside of their elbow or a tissue. Then wash those hands!

Staying healthy can be challenging, but hopefully, these tips will help you see fewer germs in your house and more time with family and friends. Wishing you all a safe, healthy winter and Holiday Season! Staying healthy can be a challenge, but hopefully these few tips will help you see less germs in your house and more time with family and friends. Wishing you all a safe, healthy winter and Holiday Season!

Be Well. Be Happy. A Winter Wellness Plan.

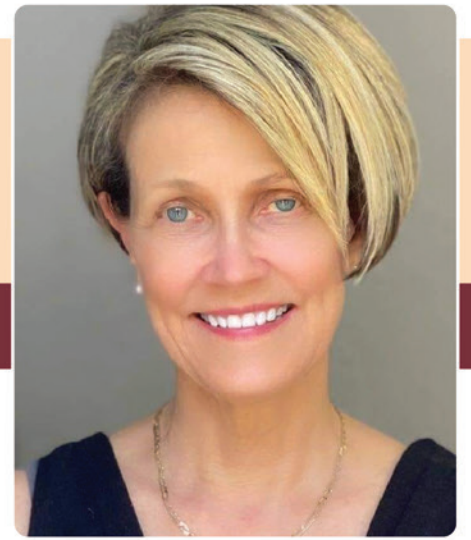
Christina Collins-Smith, MLA, LMT, RYT-500

As Winter arrives and encourages us to embrace the warmth and safety of our favorite spaces, let's take this opportunity to settle in and take stock of our wellness plan for the months ahead. As the season's cooler weather invites us to snuggle into hibernation mode, there are lots of activities you might consider to ease the stress of daily living and stay connected to your inner sense of calmness. Walking outside is a fabulous way to enjoy the refreshing benefits of nature. It's good for the heart, focuses the mind, and energizes the spirit.



Other practices you might consider for an integrative experience are yoga, qigong, and mindful meditation. If these practices are new to you, you will be surprised how even just a few weeks of regular practice can make a huge difference in your health and happiness. There are many ways to access these practices in the community and online to sustain your commitment during rainy or snowy days.

UPMC Community Health and Wellness offers regular opportunities to start and maintain your wellness practice both in person and online via Zoom. Join us. Everyone is welcome, and I would love to see you! Email me for more information at collinssmithcd@upmc.edu.



Current wellness sessions:

CHAIR YOGA

Mondays at 2:30 p.m.
Gilchrist Museum of the Arts
In person or Zoom

GENTLE YOGA

Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.
South Cumberland Library
In person or Zoom

GENTLE YOGA

Fridays at 10:30 a.m.
LaVale Library - in person

REGULAR SESSIONS

Cumberland Senior Center
Check with them for details

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

THE GREATEST STORY

Rev. Seth G. Wharton

Chaplain-Hospice, Pastoral Care Department
UPMC Western Maryland

I love this time of year: the weather, the leaves changing, Thanksgiving into Christmas, and then a brand-new start into a new year. It's a time for good food, family, and memories of good times past. It makes you think of all the things that we are thankful for and what is most valuable in our lives. My Grandma, who was a painter, would say, "Look at those beautiful changing leaves, only God can make something dying look so beautiful." Only God can take something broken and make something beautiful out of it. Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony." I think of my story and how God spared my life. He has brought beauty out of trial and has used it to touch many lives. The Lord can give beauty for ashes, strength for fear, gladness for mourning, and peace for despair. (Isaiah 61:3)

So, what is your story? What has God done for you, and how has He blessed you? Share it; it is how we overcome it! My story is special to me because it's mine, and I know what God has done for me.

There is an old movie called "The Greatest Story Ever Told." It's about Jesus. It is He who put Christ in Christmas. This is what many celebrate: His coming to die for us on the cross so that we might live. That God so loved us. He sent His only Son, Jesus. The world's calendar revolves around His birth. He said that He came to seek and save the lost, to heal the brokenhearted and bind up wounds. He loves, He forgives, He will hear when we pray. To me, He is the only peace that can fill the void of the heart. He is what makes everything valuable. He is God's special gift of Christmas, for salvation. May we know Him more. May you know how far, how wide, and how deep God loves you. I am



Back row, left to right: Kendra (wife); Seth; Rachel (daughter)
Front row, left to right: Isaiah (son); Hannah (daughter); Sarah (daughter)

so thankful to God for everything: my family, all His blessings, and His promises. I am thankful for Him sparing my life and using my story to encourage others and help them overcome! I bless you with a wonderful Christmas and New Year. I bless you with peace, joy, God's presence, and to receive God's special gift. I bless you with knowing Him, who is the greatest true story and friend to ever know.

Merry Christmas!

Thanks for letting me share, from the hospice Chaplain's heart.

ALLEGANY COUNTY HEALTH PLANNING COALITION “SPOTLIGHT”

The Cumberland YMCA

Shelly Minnigh,

Cumberland YMCA Member Services Director;
shelly@cumberlandymca.org, 301-777-9622, ext. 202

Everything the YMCA of Cumberland does is in service to making us--as individuals and as a tri-state community better.

Every day, we work side-by-side with community members to address our county's most pressing needs to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. Our work is not easy, but real and lasting changes can only come about when we work together to invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors, and the first step to achieving these improvements is having the full support of our community.

BENEFITS OF BELONGING

Being a part of the Y community gives you nationwide membership access, reduced program rates, full access to our facility, member-only events and more!



FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Wellness Center (Cardio/Strength Equipment)
- Indoor Track
- Indoor Warm Water Pool
- Indoor Lap Pool
- Steam Room & Sauna
- Locker Rooms
- Basketball Gymnasium
- Group Fitness Studio
- Rock Wall
- Cycling Studio

CHILD CARE

- Child Watch (6 weeks - 8 years)
- Before and After School Care
- Summer Camp

SPORTS

- Soccer
- Basketball
- Pickleball
- Volleyball
- Swim Team

WELLNESS

- FREE Group Fitness Classes
- Youth Strength Training
- Certified Personal Trainers
- Nutrition Counseling
- Body Composition Scanner

PROGRAM/EVENTS

- Active Older Adult classes and social activities
- Lifeguard Certifications
- Birthday Parties & Facility Rentals

YOUR MEMBERSHIP GIVES YOU:

- FREE Group Exercise Classes
- FREE Child Watch while you workout
- FREE Wellness Orientation
- FREE Body Composition Scans
- Activities for the whole family
- Member rates on classes, programs, and childcare
- Nationwide Membership

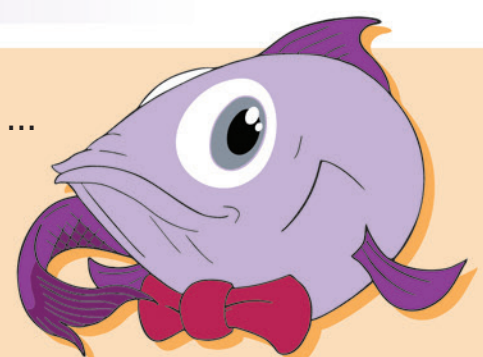
**LAUGHTER
IS THE BEST
MEDICINE**



From *Country Living* online ...

What do you call a fish
wearing a bow tie?
soFIShticated

Whenever I try to eat healthy,
a chocolate bar looks at me and Snickers!





IN THE KITCHEN with RACHEL

Rachel Sproat, RDN, LDN

Holidays are a time when family and friends gather to enjoy good food and celebrate. Research has shown that family meals have a positive impact on nutrition status, health, and the well-being of the entire family. As you juggle the craziness of holiday shopping, parties, and making baked goods, remind yourself to slow down and enjoy your food and time with others.



Sun-Dried Tomato Turkey Meatball Bake



This flavorful dish has a fun twist of traditional pasta that will impress your guests. The best part? Everything cooks in one pan, so you'll spend less time cleaning a messy stove and dishes and more time enjoying the company of others! Add a vegetable as a side to make this a well-balanced meal.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground turkey
- ¾ cup whole milk ricotta cheese
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup chopped sun dried tomatoes packed in olive oil, drained, and oil reserved
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or grated
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 (24 oz.) jar marinara sauce
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- ¾ lb. short cut pasta of your choice
- Crushed red pepper flakes
- 8 oz. low moisture mozzarella, torn
- ¼ cup fresh basil leaves

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Preheat the oven to 375° F
- 2) Make the Meatballs. In a medium bowl combine the turkey, ricotta, parmesan, sun dried tomatoes, 1 garlic clove, 1 teaspoon of the oregano, and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Using your hands mix well to combine. Roll the meat into 16 two tablespoon sized balls placing them in a 9 by 13-inch baking dish.
- 3) Drizzle the reserved sun-dried tomato oil over the meatballs and place the baking dish in the oven. Bake until the meatballs are crisp on the outside, but not yet cooked through, about 10 minutes. Remove the dish from the oven but leave the oven on.
- 4) Make the sauce. Meanwhile in a large bowl, combine the marinara sauce, 2 cups of water, the vinegar, eggs, the remaining 2 garlic cloves, the remaining 1 teaspoon of oregano, the pasta, and a pinch of red pepper flakes.
- 5) Pour the pasta and tomato sauce mixture around the meatballs, gently stirring to distribute. Sprinkle mozzarella over the top. Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil and bake until the sauce has thickened, and the noodles have cooked, about 40 minutes more. Turn the oven to broil, remove the foil, and cook until the top of the bake is golden brown, about 5 minutes.
- 6) Let the bake cool for 5 minutes, then top with fresh basil and serve.

www.halfbakedharvest.com/sun-dried-tomato-and-ricotta-turkey-meatballs/



Slow Cooker Pumpkin Chili



This hearty chili is a crowd pleaser and freezer friendly! The pumpkin adds a touch of sweetness, fiber, and vitamin A. This is a great way to sneak more veggies into your diet.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups chopped yellow onion (about 1 medium onion)
- 1 medium green bell pepper, diced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 ½ pounds ground beef or ground turkey
- 1 28-oz can diced tomatoes
- ½ 6-oz. can tomato paste
- 1 14-oz. can pumpkin puree
- 1 can black beans
- ½ - 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 2 Tbsp. chili powder (plus more to taste)
- ¾ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- ½ tsp black pepper

Optional: ¼ - ½ tsp of cayenne (for heat)

Suggested Toppings: Diced avocado, fresh cilantro, sliced green onions, lime wedges, hot sauce, sour cream and/or shredded cheese.

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Heat a large pan over medium-high heat. Add the oil and sauté the onions and peppers, stirring occasionally, for about 7 minutes or until onions start to soften.
- 2) Add the garlic and cook an additional 30 seconds or until fragrant.
- 3) Add the ground beef. Use a spatula or large spoon to break it up as it cooks. Cook until meat is nearly cooked through, about 8-10 minutes.
- 4) Drain any excess liquid from the meat then transfer the meat mixture to the slow cooker.
- 5) Add remaining ingredients (diced tomatoes through black pepper) and stir.
- 6) Set heat to LOW and cook for 6-7 hours or on HIGH for 3-4 hours. Serve with desired toppings.

<https://therealfooddietitians.com/slow-cooker-pumpkin-chili/>