

# My Hardy's

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impacts of sleep on  
digestion and immunity*



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# Editor's Note

Ever since I started my naturopathic studies, I have been fascinated with the human body and how to stay healthy. There is so much information available to us, and much of it can be overwhelming and totally confusing. However, after years of practicing as a naturopath, I have found that a foundation of simple things makes the biggest difference.

In this issue, we focus on the importance of sleep, gut health and mindful movement. Simple things truly matter – like a great night's sleep that allows us to rest and digest properly. The flow-on effects of this are huge, and renewed, energised and vibrant cells make daily life (and exercise!) more pleasurable than a chore. Add to this easily digestible and nourishing foods – that are as close to nature as possible and feature all the colours of the rainbow – and you have the foundations right for being the very best you can be.

As we move into Autumn, beautiful tones of colour surround us including immune-boosting orange foods. This is a vital time to boost our immune systems too, so look for key nutrients like vitamin C, immune-boosting herbs and all-important probiotics for gut health.

My personal autumn regime is to:

- Eat vibrant seasonal colours
- Boost immunity with superfoods and some extra, targeted vitamins
- Dance and move mindfully everyday
- Reduce screen time for a restorative restful sleep
- Laugh often
- Connect more in person
- Practice daily gratitude to truly shine!

Find your own combination that works for you, or eat, boost, dance, rest, laugh, connect and shine for a happier and healthier you over the colder months.

Until next time,



Diana Burgess - Naturopath

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*A huge congratulations to Carla Klein, the winner of our summer getaway competition! A lovely, loyal and well-deserving customer, Carla is local to our Taupo store and has long been committed to taking a holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of her family. Enjoy your time away Carla!*

# to sleep, perchance to dream



We all know the importance of a good night's sleep and many of us have experienced the brain fog, lethargy (and worse!) that comes from not getting enough. Despite that, the Sleep Wake Research Centre at Massey University found that more than a quarter of New Zealanders don't get the recommended seven to nine hours sleep per night. Sleep should occupy a third of our circadian rhythm's daily cycle, however the world we've created is 24/7, so we toss around phrases like "I'll sleep when I'm dead" as we push through ever-more tasks on our to-do lists.

Sleep isn't a luxury though – it's as important to our health as eating, drinking and breathing. During sleep we process information, consolidate memories and undergo maintenance processes that help us to function during the day. Sleep improves learning, memory and insight – repairing and restoring our brains, not just our bodies.

Trying to tackle life after only a few fitful hours of slumber each night is wreaking havoc; poor sleep increases the risk of having poor health, and poor health can make it harder to sleep... Not only has poor sleep been linked to physical problems, such as a weakened immune system, it also plays a part in our mental health.

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## The sleep-mood link

While everything is affected by sleep, this is perhaps most true when it comes to our mental health. Our sleep and mood are directly related – and not just in the way that a terrible night's sleep can make you scratchy and snappy the next day (although that happens too!)

Poor sleep is associated with a higher risk of mental illness that goes beyond the grumpiness you feel the day after a late night binge-watching Netflix. When you don't get a good night's sleep (especially over a prolonged period of time), your brain begins to function differently – and not in a good way.

Poor sleep was previously thought of as a symptom; with over two thirds of people with mental illness suffering from sleep problems. However, poor sleep is now considered a contributing factor for developing mental

illness. Studies suggest that people suffering from insomnia are three times more likely to develop a mental illness than people who sleep well – and research by Daniel Freeman at the University of Oxford found that having insomnia doubles your chances of developing depression.

A lack of sleep slows our emotional processing and can produce what has been referred to as a 'dysfunction in neural circuitry'. Put simply, not getting a good sleep can cause difficulties when it comes to processing emotional responses, setting the stage for negative thinking, increased anxiety and emotional vulnerability. Conversely, a good night's sleep fosters both mental and emotional resilience. So, in the same way that healthy diet and exercise can help to improve our mental health, so can sleep.

## A step towards solutions

So, how do we best achieve optimum sleep? The solution isn't always to have more sleep – it's about getting the balance right for the best quality sleep, which can be helped with an understanding of sleep architecture.

A study by Harvard University found that a night's sleep consists of four or five rapid eye movement (REM) and non-REM cycles. As we pass from REM to non-REM sleep, our pituitary gland releases hormones that stimulate tissue growth and repair. Our non-REM sleep brings slower breathing and sees our blood pressure and heart rate drop by as much as 30%.

While the deepest stage of non-REM sleep promotes the biological changes that boost the immune system, REM sleep – with its comparatively faster brainwaves – enhances learning and memory, and contributes to our emotional health.



## Lifestyle changes to break the cycle

In more recent years there have been huge advances in non-pharmacological support for sleep. Much of the research points to the idea that sleep quality can vastly improve with good 'sleep hygiene' practices (bedtime habits) and supplementation.



### HEALTHY HABITS:

**Follow a regular routine:** Your body craves consistency, so soothe your circadian rhythms by maintaining similar sleep and awake times. Oversleeping can be detrimental too; you can't repay a week of sleep debt with a huge weekend snooze session. To catch up, aim for an extra hour each night instead.



**Exercise and spend time outside:** Get your body moving during the day for a better sleep come night-time. For even better effects, do at least some form of activity outside. Exposure to natural light helps to reinforce the body's natural circadian rhythm and optimum sleep-wake cycles.



**Keep your bedroom just for sleeping:** Try to avoid sitting in bed answering emails so that your brain doesn't associate that space as a place of busy activity.

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**Avoid stimulants, especially close to bedtime:** Most of us know not to drink a latte or Red Bull before bed, but some say we shouldn't indulge beyond mid-afternoon. Consider other stimulants too, such as alcohol and nicotine – and the less likely suspects; even exercising within three hours of bedtime can cause issues.



**Turn the lights down low:** You've likely heard about avoiding your phone or computer too close to bedtime; this isn't simply kill-joy advice! Try it, and avoid harsh overhead lights in the hour before bedtime. Opt for soft lamps, as the absence of light triggers the release of sleep hormone, melatonin, which signals your body that it's time to rest.



## SUPER SUPPLEMENTS:

**Zizyphus for better zzzzs:** Used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries, this calming ingredient is prized for its sedative and sleep-promoting properties. It is also thought to reduce anxiety and help to quiet the mind.

**Lavender love:** Lavender oil has long been revered for its relaxing properties and it's no old wives' tale; the science stacks up! Even just sniffing some lavender oil increases slow-wave sleep, the deep slumber that causes the heart-rate to slow and muscles to relax.

**High-five for 5HTP:** Not surprisingly following our look at how sleep and mental health are connected, our happiness hormone – serotonin – is related to melatonin. It also plays a key role in regulating sleep-wake cycles, as well as our mood. By replenishing serotonin levels, amino acid 5HTP helps enhance sleep.

**Magnificent magnesium:** Great for countering stress (a prime enemy of good sleep), magnesium plays a part in over 300 enzyme systems. These regulate different biochemical reactions in the body, including restricting the release of adrenaline and cortisol and putting the brakes on brain activity, allowing you to relax.

**Calming chamomile:** Popular in tea form, the phytochemicals in chamomile have three effects on the central nervous system. Firstly, they bind to gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA) receptors in the brain, which promote calm and the onset of sleep. Secondly, they affect monoamine neurotransmitters in the brain, including serotonin, which is linked to sleep. Lastly, by acting on the neuroendocrine system, chamomile helps the body release more melatonin, which works to maintain the sleep-wake cycle.

**Phytonutrients from Tart Cherry and certain NZ Sweet Cherries:** The only significant natural source of natural sleep supporting phytonutrients, these cherries help to regulate the body's internal clock and sleep-wake cycle, and support quality sleep with very reliable results. The combination of anthocyanin antioxidants with the phytonutrients in these cherries is particularly beneficial.

Allowing yourself to get a good amount of shut-eye, on a regular basis, not only restores your body, but your mind too. The power of sleep and its relationship with your mental wellbeing is more vital than ever in today's busy, restless culture, so talk to a Hardy's expert if you'd like to explore further support for an optimum sleep.



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# Tackling The Trifecta

## of sleep, digestion, & immunity



We've seen the impact that sleep has on our mental health, but it's also worth talking about the connection between our gut and our mind and even, to a lesser extent, our sleep and digestion. (You're starting to see how truly holistic our health really is now, aren't you?)

### Sweet dreams are made of genes...

Getting adequate sleep is definitely more complex than just maintaining energy levels; behind the yawns lurks something much more significant. Research has shown that when people cut their sleep from 7.5 hours to 6.5 hours a night there is an increase in the expression of as many as 500 different genes – genes that are associated with everything from stress to inflammation and immune response.

I'm sure we don't need to tell you what lowered immunity means for your health, especially as we're approaching the season of winter ills and chills, but there are a host of other conditions that have their roots in inflammation and compromised immune activity – from arthritis to asthma to coeliac disease to inflammatory bowel disease. That's not to say that lack of sleep is going to explicitly cause these, but if you have a genetic inclination towards any of them, poor sleep could increase the likelihood of one of these conditions actually developing.

It can take as little as one week of inadequate sleep for your body to start shifting around its internal functions – so this isn't something to postpone until your life calms down. Make sure you look at page 5 and 7 for some of our tips for a super slumber.

### Getting to the guts of it

No doubt you've heard the expression "listen to your gut" at some point – however, we quite often take our digestive system for granted until it causes us obvious discomfort. When it comes to optimising our overall health and boosting immunity, it's a fairly vital place to start.

Inside your gut exists a garden of bacteria. This eco-system significantly affects your health, playing a vital role in how our immune system functions and our mental and emotional wellbeing. So many conditions can stem from poor gut health – from allergies to arthritis and mood disorders – so it really is important to make sure our gut is performing as well as it should be.

Our gut, in many ways, acts as the body's second brain; not only do the gut and the brain play an important part in gastrointestinal function, how our stomach is doing can also impact on our mood, emotions and intuitive decision-making. Both the brain and the gut are the only organs in the human body with their own nervous systems and the gut produces 95% of the body's serotonin. It even contains more neurotransmitters than the brain – so you can see the impact on mood, and how sleep factors into this.

Adequate, quality sleep helps to reduce stress levels, which means excess cortisol and other stress hormones are less likely to be interfering with digestive processes. Our metabolism also reacts to the amount of sleep we get, releasing more of the hormones that drive appetite into the blood when we're tired. We've seen too that we're generally likely to have less inflammation in our body when we're well-rested, which means we've got more chance of digesting and utilising the food we consume effectively. Proper utilisation of food is vital to getting the nutrients from it, many of which support our immune systems.







## The digestion-immunity link

Further to that, 80% of the cells that make up our immune system live within the walls of our gut, so when we are stressed and not sleeping enough to replenish our gut bacteria, the good stuff gets depleted, which lowers our immune system.

The food industry has also dramatically changed our diets. We're now exposed to an increasing array of highly processed, high sugar and low fibre foods that wreak havoc on our digestive systems. With a bit of planning and time, it's possible to restore the health and balance of your gastrointestinal system – and healing your gut will allow the body to build a stronger immune system, as well as produce the right kind of bacteria that tells your brain that it's okay to feel good again, so it's well worth the effort.

**DO IT VIA DIET:** Make sure your diet contains a good balance of fibre-rich vegetables, low-sugar fruits, wholegrains and legumes. It can also help to consider supplementation; digestive enzymes, prebiotics and in some cases, anti-inflammatory support like omega 3 or zinc can help the digestive system heal.

**POSITIVE PROBIOTICS:** A good quality probiotic is also beneficial, refurbishing the gut with good bacteria. When children have low immunity, an immune-boosting probiotic is often the first place to start, but options exist for the whole family.

## Sleep your way to wellness

So, how else does sleep factor in? It's clear that people who don't sleep as well have a much less potent immune system. A new study by the University of Washington Medicine Sleep Center has been the first to show suppressed immune gene expression in chronic sleep deprivation. Sleep is regenerative and supports immune pathway protein production that ensures our immune system functions properly.

Your immune system is effectively a network of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to defend the body against nasty foreign invaders, such as bacteria, parasites and fungi that cause infections. While we're asleep, the immune system releases protein cytokines to fight off infections and other antibodies.

The connection between sleep and our immune systems is so significant that many of the vitamins that are essential for our immunity also help to aid our sleep, and vice versa.



No discussion of immunity is complete without the appearance of vitamin C, which stimulates the formation of antibodies that ward off unwelcome visitors in the body.

What is less known is that vitamin C is also an essential nutrient for serotonin production, the happy hormone which interacts with its fellow hormone, melatonin, to have a significant impact on how well (or otherwise) we sleep. Not only that, vitamin C works to lower cortisol, the stress hormone, in the body, which helps with a more restful and restorative (and hence, immune boosting) sleep – as well as improved digestion.



A necessity for good health, vitamin D is often described as a "miracle nutrient" for your immune system and strengthens the sleep-mood-immunity connection even

further. As well as enabling your body to produce well over 200 antimicrobial peptides that are indispensable in fighting off infections, a growing body of research shows that vitamin D plays an important role in how well we sleep.

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Sharing is caring – but not when it comes to germs. Come in-store and talk to a Hardy's expert – or find us online – if you need more help tackling the trifecta of sleep, digestion and immunity ahead of winter.

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## Diana's Corner

# Mindful Movement



In this issue, instead of recommending a specific set of products, I wanted to highlight an activity or, more broadly, a concept in this column... That of mindful movement.

We've already seen, in the stories that came before this, the interconnectedness of so many aspects of our wellbeing, so it's my belief that the best approaches to our health and happiness are as holistic as possible. My holistic, mindful movement practice is Nia: a fun, barefoot practice that combines 52 'moves' from nine different art forms – 3 martial arts, 3 healing arts and 3 dance arts – to celebrate the joy of movement.

Created over 30 years ago, Nia was the first 'fusion fitness' workout and blends both eastern and western movements and concepts. At its heart, Nia respects the body's natural intelligence and interconnectedness

and adapts to fit your personal needs and achieve the cardiovascular fitness, toning, strengthening and flexibility that you desire.

Nia inspires you to make moving part of your everyday life but, as opposed to most workouts that end in the gym, Nia reaches right into the other aspects of your life; each art form works on all aspects of your health and the soul-stirring music stimulates creativity, healing, emotions and wellbeing. It's a true body, mind and spirit workout.

My Nia journey began just over three years ago when I took off my shoes, abandoned my fears and joined in my first class at a lifestyle retreat. Since then I've trained as a teacher and learnt so much more about the science and principles of Nia. I truly believe that it's through our investigation of our own body, mind and spirit that we really get to know ourselves and can unlock our full potential for health and happiness.

## Body

Nia has taught me to listen to my body and what it needs and, by doing so, has firmed my abdomen and core, as well as my other muscles becoming stronger and more defined without the use of external weights. My flexibility, mobility, stability and posture are all improving daily and my 50 year old body looks and feels better than it did 10 years ago!

## Mind

Nia allows me to believe in my own potential and work on being more mindfully present, connecting with my thoughts, decisions and the mental sensation of feelings. My mind now has more clarity and not only when I'm dancing. I feel more consciously aware and present in every aspect of my life. To me, it's like a living meditation and provides a way for me to express myself.

## Spirit

Nia allows my uniqueness to shine and, in dancing through class, I now find myself dancing through life. Nia's not about getting it right, or being the best – and as a competitive Virgo, this was a shift for me. I've learnt too that everything has its own energy fingerprint, composed of a body, mind and unique spirit.

Trust me, you don't need any dance experience to enjoy a Nia class – just a willingness to take your shoes off and join in with an open mind and a readiness to feel great and have fun! In my opinion, when you add music to movement, and allow the body to move in its own way, you create something magical. To find a class near you, go to [www.nianow.com](http://www.nianow.com)

# Future Proofing for Winter Immunity

by Karin Spicer N.D  
Lifestream Naturopath



When it comes to our houses, technology, or our place of work it is commonplace to plan for future possible eventualities or “future proof”. It seems a logical extension to also apply this principle to our health in general, especially for winter immunity. We know in advance that once the weather turns the corner into colder weather our chances of encountering “ills and chills” are higher. We know that having to take time out to recover can sometimes be inconvenient and even costly. There is action that we can take to help support healthy immunity to provide a fighting chance of combating those winter invaders.



The rule of thumb to eat your 5+2 daily means 5 serves of vegetables and 2 serves of fruit. Eat a rainbow of colours to provide a wide variety of nutrients. If you are not so good on the veg and fruit, or have a higher requirement for your daily nutrients through factors like experiencing a stressful time, or training and participating in sports, then you could top up with **Lifestream Bioactive Spirulina Balance**. The plant based nutrients in spirulina, the original superfood, are easy to digest and absorb. It contains vitamins and minerals, protein, GLA and antioxidants to support digestion and immunity, and recovery from oxidative stress.

Stressful situations in our lives can also have an impact on our relaxation and sleep patterns, which can have a knock on effect on our immune response. We tend to use up our magnesium stores during these times and need some extra nutritional

support. **Lifestream Natural Magnesium** supports a healthy nervous system and restful sleep. If we get our 7-8 hours of sleep each night we get to recharge our batteries so we have the energy for all our systems, including our immune system, to operate at their best.

Exciting new research has shown that specific strains of good bacteria play a large part in supporting a healthy digestive and immune system, and a healthy mood, especially during stressful times. **Lifestream Advanced Probiotics Mood + Immune** contains a powerful combination of 4 clinically researched strains of beneficial bacteria and the prebiotic FOS. Together they support the brain-gut axis which is the 2 lane highway between the brain and the gut for healthy immunity, digestion and mood.

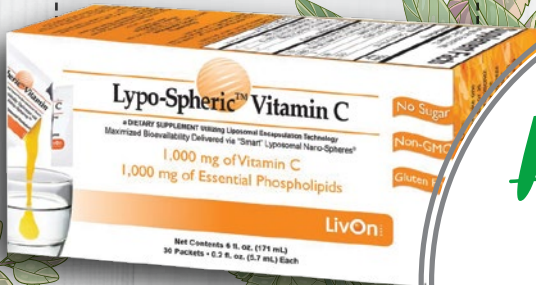
So invest in you- take time out to have a think as to what action you could take to “future proof” yourself for winter. Make sure you stay hydrated, take 10 minutes each day to breathe and clear you mind of the days challenges, make sure you cover the bases with your nutrition to stay vibrant and healthy.



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# Hot Picks!

An expertly hand-picked selection of unique and fabulous supplements – some of which you won't find elsewhere!

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## Harker Herbs

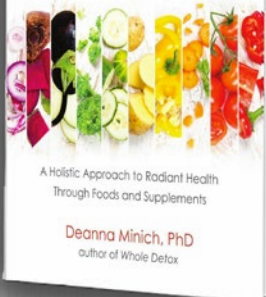
Specialising in 100% natural traditional herbal tonics and elixirs, Harker Herbs believe in restoring balance to the body in order to return it to a better state of health.

**Buy the Harker Herbs 250ml Immune Tonic this autumn and get the Harker Herbs 100ml Ear Nose Throat Tonic free!**

Harkers Herbs, Northland



## THE RAINBOW DIET



## The Rainbow Diet by Deanna Minich, PhD

Diana's recommended read! Outlining a holistic approach to radiant health through a combination of vibrant, colourful wholefoods and natural supplements, this book is packed full of recipes and activities to help you shine through every season.

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**\$24.90**



# New TO HARDY'S

## Naturopathy: Nature's Medicine

Every body is different and we love that natural medicine embraces this with its focus on finding the uniqueness in each individual. Did you know that as well as providing the supplements we stock in store, we also offer 'prescription only' natural medicine that can be recommended uniquely for you following a consultation with one of our qualified Hardy's experts?

With options suitable for people of all ages (including babies!), if you're interested in finding your unique prescription from nature, speak to one of our Hardy's experts. Consults are available in-store at all our branches, or in purpose-built clinics attached to our Glenfield, Taupo, Whangarei and Kerikeri stores; visit our website to find out more.

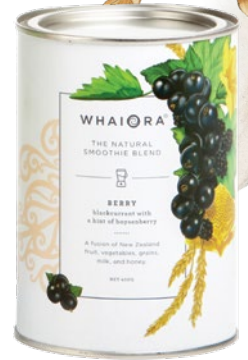
## Whaiora – natural goodness made easy!

Simply put, Whaiora is the pursuit of wellbeing. Behind this Maori-owned, natural food brand is the belief that good food choices are essential to a naturally balanced lifestyle and that it's our role to nurture our world as kaitiaki (guardians) of our natural resources.

Their real-food smoothie blends are packed full of vibrant fruits and vegetables, oats, milk and a hint of honey to make it easy to add balance to your diet and your day. With no artificial components, simply add a scoop to water and ice, then blend for a delicious wholefood smoothie.



**TASTE TESTERS**  
Pop in-store during March to sample the range of Whaiora smoothie blends.



## Harker's Herbals Children's Range

Mood and immunity issues affect our kiddies too and everything - including behaviour and their capacity to learn - is so much better when they have a restful sleep (not to mention our job as Mum is happier too!) Harker Herbals is a fabulous, effective and great tasting range that our Hardy's experts love and recommend. Talk to us for more info, or to try a taste-tester in store.



Always read the label and use as directed. If symptoms persist see your healthcare professional Harkers Herbal, Northland

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NEW

# NATURE'S WELLNESS



## SUPPORTS MOOD BALANCE & IMMUNITY



A unique new probiotic with strains of beneficial bacteria that support a healthy digestive system in times of stress. Also supports a healthy immune response and the two-way connection our gut fosters with our mental health and wellbeing.

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