

June is a time to reflect on how we care for ourselves and those around us. This month, we're recognizing both **Men's Health Week (June 10–16)** and **Pride Month**, two important reminders that health and wellbeing look different for everyone, and all deserve support. Whether you're exploring new ways to boost your mood, eat more colourfully, or simply slow down and recharge, continue reading for practical tips to support your mental and physical health, your way.

The power of positive affirmations

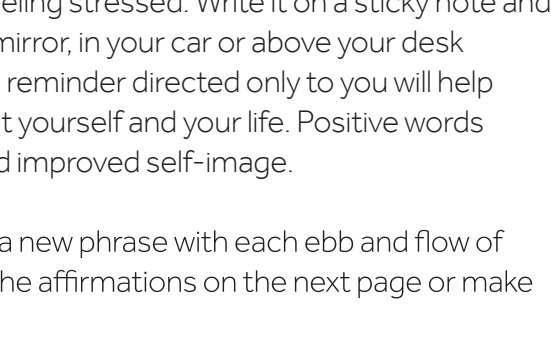
“Good job!”

It's a phrase we say to and hear from kids, colleagues and even ourselves over and over. While it's a simple phrase, its positive effect goes a long way. We all need to feel valued, seen and appreciated.

Since your primary relationship is with yourself, it would seem natural that you are your best friend and biggest cheerleader. However, that's not always the case. We all have self-doubt and moments of negativity that emerge in our internal monologues or the little voices in our heads.

Change the conversation

The negative noise in your head can drown out positive things if you let it. Remaking your relationship with yourself is possible with effort. By doing things like increasing your self-awareness, reducing stress and anxiety levels, and working to stay present, the conversation can evolve. One of the easiest ways to make change is to regularly recite a positive, affirming phrase.



Find your phrase

Find an affirmation or mantra that works for you. Choose words of encouragement that resonate. Tell yourself things you want to hear. Acknowledge your strengths. Choose words that help you reach your goals. Talk to your soul.

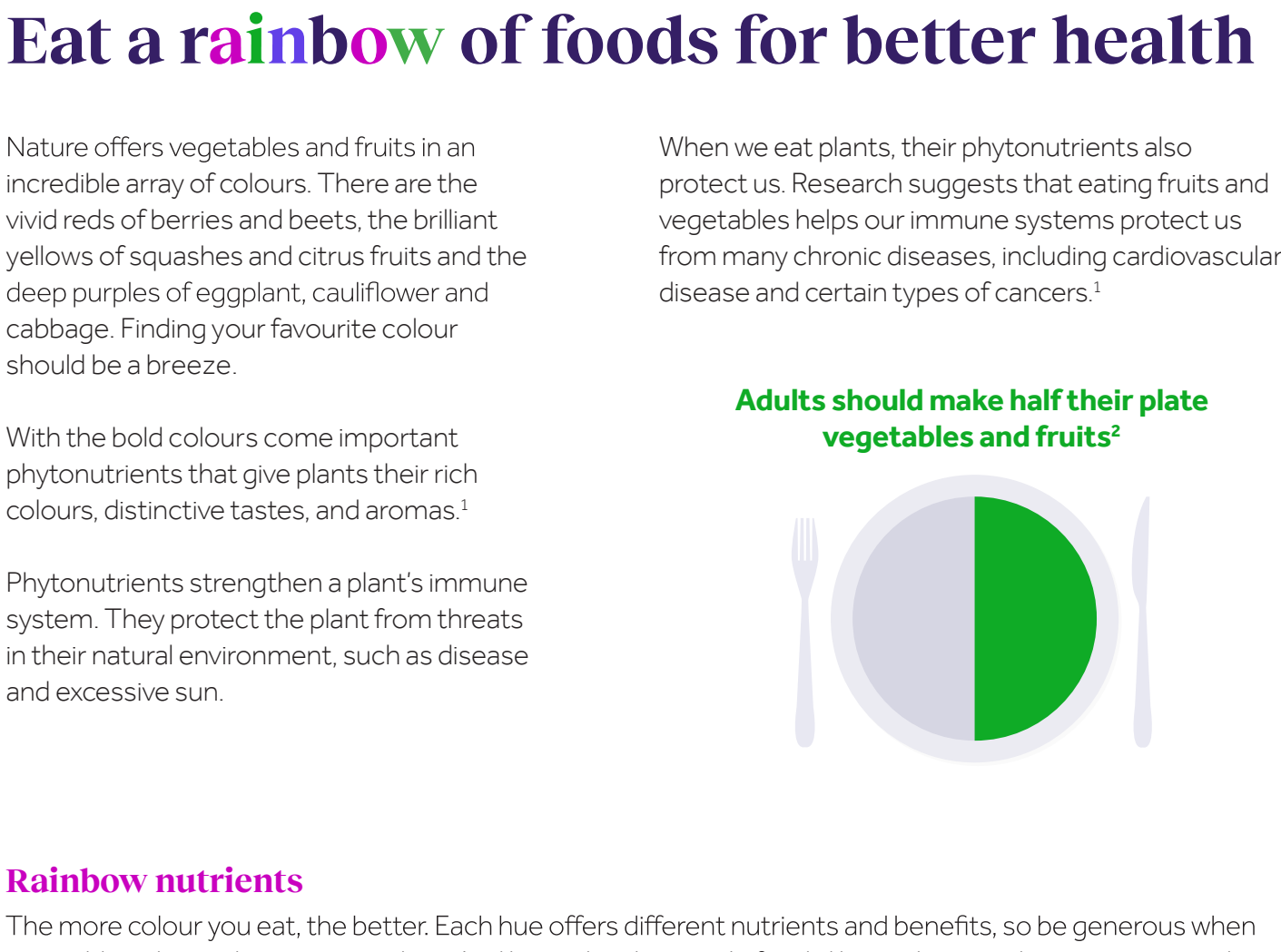
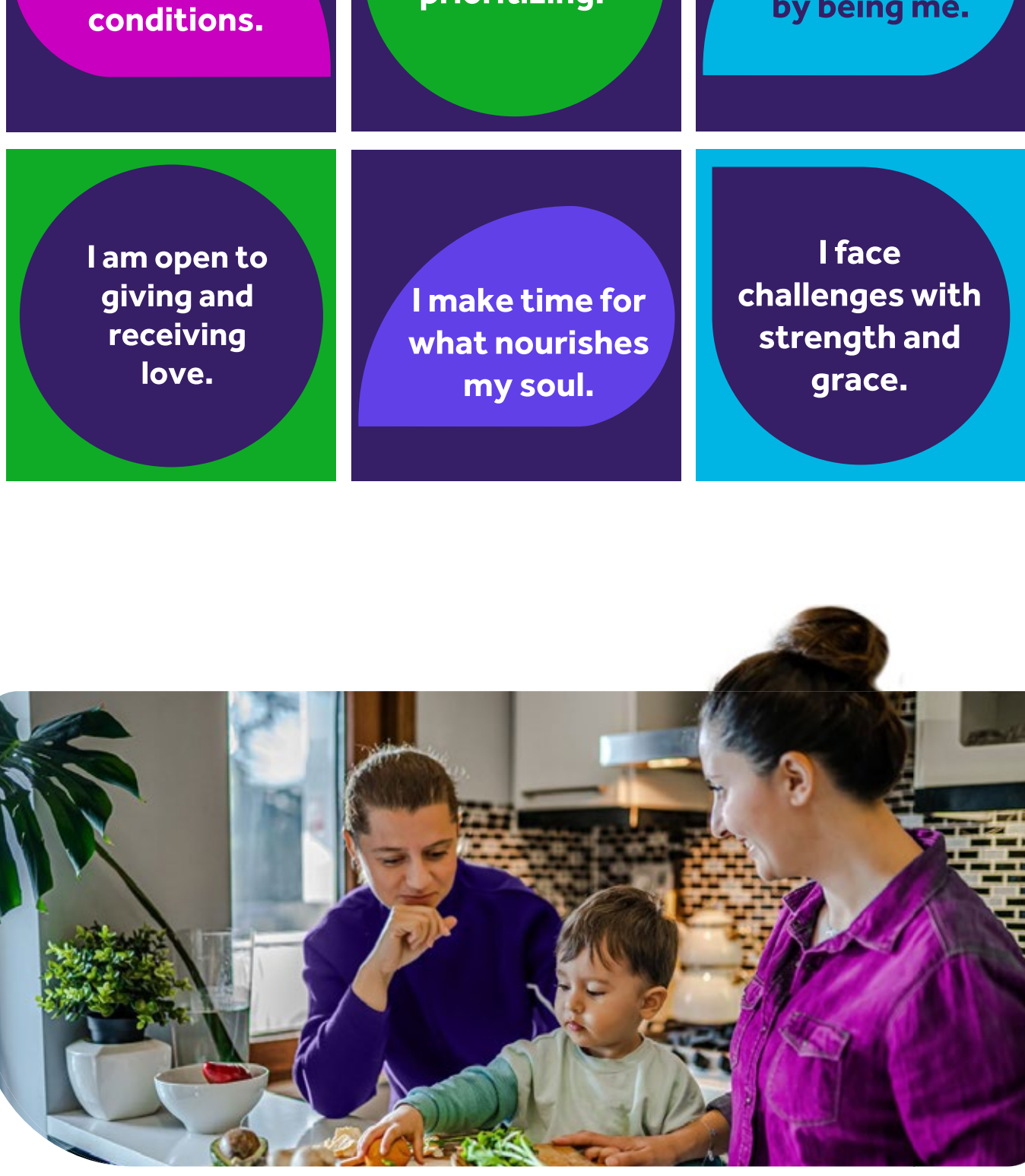


Say your phrase first thing in the morning. Say it before you go to bed. Say it when you're feeling stressed. Write it on a sticky note and put it on your bathroom mirror, in your car or above your desk at work. Seeing a positive reminder directed only to you will help make you feel good about yourself and your life. Positive words bring positive feelings and improved self-image.

Allow yourself to choose a new phrase with each ebb and flow of your life. Choose one of the affirmations on the next page or make up one of your own.

By harnessing the power of positive affirmations, you can give yourself the support to do anything you set out to do.

Choose your favourite affirmation, print it out and put it somewhere you can see it every day!



Eat a rainbow of foods for better health

Nature offers vegetables and fruits in an incredible array of colours. There are the vivid reds of berries and beets, the brilliant yellows of squashes and citrus fruits and the deep purples of eggplant, cauliflower and cabbage. Finding your favourite colour should be a breeze.

With the bold colours come important phytonutrients that give plants their rich colours, distinctive tastes, and aromas.¹

Phytonutrients strengthen a plant's immune system. They protect the plant from threats in their natural environment, such as disease and excessive sun.

When we eat plants, their phytonutrients also protect us. Research suggests that eating fruits and vegetables helps our immune systems protect us from many chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancers.¹

Adults should make half their plate vegetables and fruits²



Rainbow nutrients

The more colour you eat, the better. Each hue offers different nutrients and benefits, so be generous when assembling the rainbow on your plate. And leave the skins on. In foods like apples, peaches, potatoes and eggplants, the skin contains beneficial nutrients and fibre.

Orange and yellow

Beta-carotene supports your immune system, vision, skin and bone health.¹

Try carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, winter squash and apricots.

Pink and red

Lycopene, found in crimson-hued delights, fights gene-damaging free radicals, protecting against prostate cancer and promoting heart health.¹

Try strawberries, tomatoes, pink grapefruit, cherries, red onions and red bell peppers.

Green

Rich in beta-carotene and lutein, these boost eye and heart health and help protect against cancer.¹

Try spinach, kale, broccoli, brussels sprouts, collard greens, lettuce and artichokes.

Blue and purple

Containing powerful anthocyanins, they help keep your blood vessels healthy.¹

Try blueberries, blackberries, plums and radishes.

Brown and white

This diverse group boasts anthoxanthins, a powerful antioxidant.¹

Try onions, garlic, ginger, parsnips, turnips, cauliflower and mushrooms.



Improve your microbiome

Eating a wide variety of vegetables and fruits helps keep your microbiome healthy. This collection of bacteria and other microorganisms that live in your intestines influences your body's physiology, metabolism, immunity and nutrition.³

Fruits and vegetables, especially the high-fiber ones, feed this organ and keep it healthy.

Fermented foods give your body probiotics and work to maintain the balance of the microflora in your digestive system. Consider naturally fermented foods like pickles, sauerkraut and kimchi as super-charged veggies and add them to your daily diet. Other probiotic foods with live active cultures include yogurt, kefir, kombucha, tempeh, miso and some cheeses.⁴

Korean avocado kimchi salad cups

Makes 8 servings | Prep: 15 min

This handheld salad offers the double benefit of fermented vegetables and good fats in one delicious bite. If you're looking for more protein, add shredded chicken, salmon, tofu cubes or edamame.

Ingredients

- 2 avocados (diced)
- 2 cups kimchi, prepared
- 1 large head butter (bibb) lettuce, leaves separated
- 1 large carrot (grated)
- 1 cup red cabbage (shredded)
- 2 green onions (sliced)
- 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1 lemon (quartered)

Nutrition

Serving size: ½ cup

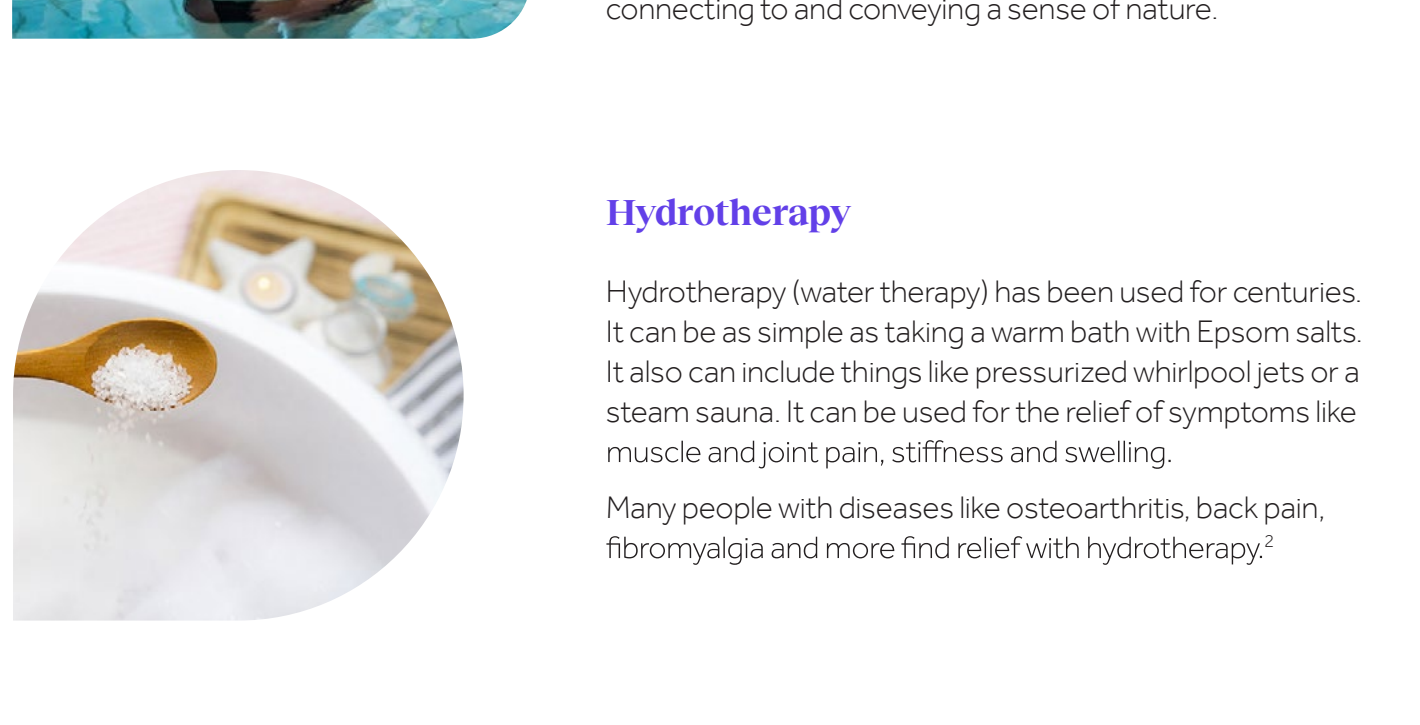


Preparation

In a medium bowl, mix the diced avocado, kimchi, carrot and cabbage. To serve, top butter lettuce leaves with avocado-kimchi mixture. Top with chopped green onions and a sprinkle of toasted sesame seeds. Serve with lemon wedge.

Calories: 65 | total fat: 4 g | saturated fat: 0 g | sodium: 200 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 5 g | fibre: 3 g | sugars: 1 g | protein: 1 g | potassium: 292 mg

¹ <https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/what-are-phytochemicals/>
² <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/make-healthy-meals-with-the-eat-well-plate/>
³ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/fermented-foods-for-better-gut-health-2018051613841>
⁴ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/nutrition/prebiotics-understanding-their-role-in-gut-health>



The benefits of water

Have you ever solved a problem or come up with a great idea while you were in the shower? Have you ever felt like you rebooted your head and body after a bath, a dip in the pool or a walk on the beach?

The underlying influence in all these cases is water.

Up to 65% of your body is made of water¹

We know water is an integral part of our body and how we function. Learn how water affects us through different uses:



Water-based activity

Swimming and aquatic exercise have many physiological benefits, in part due to their unique properties of buoyancy, pressure and resistance. Aquatic exercise is effective in reducing feelings of anxiety. It also can boost your mood. The sensation of water flowing over the skin when moving in water reduces the load on the spine, knees and other joints.

And water-based activity can also help us feel grounded by connecting to and conveying a sense of nature.



Hydrotherapy

Hydrotherapy (water therapy) has been used for centuries. It can be as simple as taking a warm bath with Epsom salts. It also can include things like pressurized whirlpool jets or a steam sauna. It can be used for the relief of symptoms like muscle and joint pain, stiffness and swelling.

Many people with diseases like osteoarthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia and more find relief with hydrotherapy.²



Cold water immersion

Post-exercise cold plunges are a hot fitness and recovery topic. However, in northern climates, year-round swimming in local bodies of water has been practiced for centuries.

When your body's core temperature drops post-workout through brief cold immersion, many positive things can happen, like:

- Firing up your immune system
- Increasing your metabolism
- Reducing inflammatory response
- Reducing stress responses and
- Improving your mood and wellbeing

Before you start any new exercise routine or treatment, talk to your doctor or physical therapist to make sure it's safe.



Calming waters

Water triggers the parasympathetic nervous system to release hormones that tell your body to calm down.³

A popular theory among surfing enthusiasts is that hearing water—crashing waves, bubbling brooks, waterfalls—creates “pink noise.” The belief is that pink noise combines all frequencies the human ear can hear. This would support why napping at the beach is so restful. Finally, when water molecules collide—in a rainstorm, waterfall, shower spray or when a wave breaks—they release negative air ions.⁴ These boost our mood and energy.⁵

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK555956/>
² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9114041/>
³ <https://www.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.neuropsych.20240053>
⁴ <https://mentalhealth.harvard.edu/catalyst/the-therapeutic-power-of-blue-space>
⁵ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10175061/#Sec3>

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