

# TOTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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## *Unlocking Muscle Health: Essential Insights for Long-Term Wellness*

Building and maintaining muscle mass is vital for overall health, particularly as we navigate aging and lifestyle demands. This article explores the science of muscle hypertrophy, offering practical strategies rooted in medical evidence to support everyday vitality.

At its heart, muscle gain combats sarcopenia—the progressive loss of muscle starting in our 30s, which intensifies after 60 and contributes to frailty, increased fall risk, and metabolic imbalances. Resistance training reverses these effects by increasing lean body mass, improving insulin sensitivity, and strengthening bones. Research demonstrates that consistent strength programs enhance body composition and functional strength, even with moderate frequency, benefiting individuals across fitness levels. Cardiovascular advantages are equally compelling: regular muscle-building activities reduce blood pressure and lower heart disease risk, making them suitable for those with or without pre-existing conditions.

An effective regimen featuring three weekly sessions of compound exercises like squats, deadlifts, and presses, complemented by

accessible bodyweight variations. Progressive overload—incrementally ramping up reps or resistance—promotes adaptation while minimizing injury risk. Nutrition plays a starring role, recommending 1.1–1.6g of protein per kg of body weight from diverse sources such as soy milk, black beans, or any plant-based options, paired with a modest calorie surplus to fuel growth. Adequate hydration and quality sleep are underscored as key recovery elements, with simple tracking tools like grip strength measurements to monitor progress.

Potential risks are handled transparently: novices, especially those with health issues, should seek medical clearance to prevent strains or exacerbations. While extreme methods (e.g., unchecked supplements) can strain the heart, a balanced approach like the one described keeps complications low. These principles foster lasting habits that boost mood, energy, and resilience, emphasizing muscle health as a foundation for preventive medicine rather than fleeting aesthetics.



# Golden Chickpea Coconut Curry

## Ingredients

- **Base:** 2 tbsp. coconut oil, 1 onion (diced), 3 garlic cloves (minced), 1 tbsp. ginger (grated)
- **Veggies:** 2 tomatoes (diced), 1 sweet potato (cubed), 2 cups spinach
- **Protein & Creaminess:** 1 can chickpeas (drained), 1 can coconut milk
- **Spices:** 1 tsp. curry powder, turmeric, cumin; ½ tsp. smoked paprika; salt/pepper
- **Finish:** Juice of ½ lime, cilantro (garnish)

## Instructions

1. **Sauté Aromatics:** Heat oil; cook onion (3 min), then add garlic/ginger (2 min).
2. **Build Base:** Add tomatoes; cook (5 min), then stir in spices.
3. **Cook Curry:** Add sweet potato and coconut milk; simmer (15 min).
4. **Finish:** Stir in chickpeas (5 min) and spinach (2 min). Add lime juice, salt/pepper.
5. **Serve:** Over rice with cilantro garnish.

## Nutritional Benefits

- **Chickpeas:** High in protein and fiber, great for digestion and muscle repair.
- **Sweet Potato:** Rich in vitamin A (for eye health) and complex carbs for sustained energy.
- **Spinach:** Packed with iron, calcium, and antioxidants.
- **Coconut Milk:** Provides healthy fats for brain function and energy.
- **Turmeric:** Anti-inflammatory and boosts immunity.

This curry is a **nutritious, protein-packed, and energy-boosting meal!**

This recipe has been adapted from <https://thevegan8.com/sweet-potato-chickpea-and-spinach-coconut-curry/>.

## OUR *Prayer Room* AND *Worship* SERVICE

Caring for the whole person—body, mind and spirit — is an integral part of our hospital's approach to health care. Hong Kong Adventist Hospital takes every effort to look after your spiritual and emotional needs.

We have a prayer room which is located on the ground floor opposite to the entrance. It is opened to people of all faiths.

Our clinically trained chaplains are available 24-hours a day, seven days a week to offer guidance and counseling. For those who request, prayers are offered for the patients and their families.

Regardless of religious affiliation or the lack thereof, our chaplains are ready to offer spiritual and emotional support during your stay at the hospital.

A short inspiring morning message is offered every weekday from 8:40am to 9:00am in La Rue Building 7B. All patients are welcome to attend.

Please feel free to call upon our chaplains for emotional and spiritual support or to just have a listening ear.

May God bless you.

**From the Chaplain's Office**







## *The Hidden Cost of Cheer:*

# *Understanding Holiday Depression*

The shimmering lights, bustling night markets, and festive cheer in Hong Kong signal an extended season of celebration from Christmas to Lunar New Year. However, beneath this surface of joy, many people experience feelings of loneliness, stress, and sadness. This disconnect between expectation and reality is a common but often unspoken experience.

The causes of these "holiday blues" are particularly acute in a dense, fast-paced city like Hong Kong. The social and financial pressure to participate can be overwhelming. Research into global mental health trends, such as the large-scale Global Burden of Disease study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*, shows that depressive disorders are a leading cause of disability worldwide, and periods of high social expectation can significantly exacerbate symptoms for those affected [1]. The emphasis on family reunion during Christmas and the Chinese Lunar New Year can amplify feelings of isolation for those who have lost loved ones or are distanced from family.

### **A Toolkit for Managing Your Well-being**

If the holidays feel draining, your feelings are valid. Here are some strategies to help:

1. **Redefine "Celebration":** Challenge the idea of a perfect celebration. It is okay to decline invitations or scale back traditions. Focus on one or two activities that bring you genuine comfort.
2. **Set a Realistic Budget:** Decide on a spending limit for gifts and meals beforehand to prevent financial anxiety from overshadowing the festivities.

3. **Acknowledge Grief and Loss:** If you are missing someone, create a new tradition to honour their memory. Allowing space for these feelings can reduce their power.
4. **Seek Quiet Moments:** Counter the constant stimulation by visiting one of the city's country parks. Even a short walk can significantly reduce stress levels. The mental health benefits of spending time in nature are well-documented by organisations like the World Health Organization [2].
5. **Know When to Seek Help:** If feelings of sadness are persistent and overwhelming, reach out for professional support. The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong offers a 24-hour hotline (Languages: Cantonese: 2389 2222 / Mandarin: 2389 2223 / English: 2389 2222), and Mind HK provides essential resources and information [3].

The holidays don't have to be a test of endurance. By setting boundaries and practising self-compassion, you can find a sense of peace that is the truest gift of the season.

- [1] GBD 2019 Mental Disorders Collaborators. (2022). Global, regional, and national burden of 12 mental disorders in 204 countries and territories, 1990–2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 9(2), 137-150.  
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(21\)00395-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(21)00395-3/fulltext) (This link provides open access to the full article).
- [2] World Health Organization. (2016). Urban green spaces and health.  
<https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289051988>
- [3] Mind HK. (n.d.). Find Help Now.  
<https://www.mind.org.hk/find-help-now/>



**Lifestyle Management Center (LMC)** is a crucial component of Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, articulating its mission, aiming to provide health education to both our patients and the general public regarding the benefits of 'Total Health'.

Through services and programs such as the Lifestyle Medicine Clinic, comprehensive lifestyle assessment, health screenings, delicious vegan cooking demonstration, fitness club and interactive educational programs, participants can begin to restore their own health through lifestyle modification.

Our success depends largely on your participation and support. Let us strive together to promote better holistic health in our society.

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Your generosity will contribute to the healthy lifestyle education to the general public through Lifestyle Management Center. It will help our center run health seminars, cooking and fitness classes and health programs in order to educate the public on how to prevent, improve and even reverse chronic diseases.

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