Summer Wellness
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Summer Wellness

Keep Summer Healthy: Shape Up Your Eating Habits

Want to shape up your eating habits over the summer? With an abundance of fruits and vegetables, there is no time like the present. You’ve decided to cut back on hot dogs, peel the fatty skin off your barbequed chicken, and limit mayo-laden macaroni and potato salads. Will this be enough to shape up your summertime eating habits?

Cutting back on high-fat meats and mayo-drenched salads is a good place to start. But along with limiting certain foods, it’s just as important to think about what to add to your meal plan.

To make healthy eating habits stick, it’s better to think more about enjoying your food and less about what to avoid. Here are some ideas to whet your appetite that won’t expand your waistline.

Make simple substitutions
Breaking an unhealthy food habit doesn’t mean you have to make radical changes or follow complicated recipes.

- Exchange artery-clogging creamy sauces and dressings with marinades or dressings made with olive oil or canola oil (heart-healthy fats) and herbs.
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• Instead of serving a classic potato salad with creamy mayo, try steaming new potatoes and drizzling them with olive oil, garlic powder, and chopped chives.
• Look for chicken or turkey sausages to grill instead of pork. They taste delicious and often offer great savings on fat and calories.
• Use wholesome barley or quinoa for a grain-based salad instead of pasta or potatoes. Add lots of raw, cut-up veggies, such as red peppers, carrots, red onion, and celery.
• Go for sorbets and fruits instead of heavy cakes if you crave dessert.
• Drink plenty of water in lieu of sports drinks and sodas.
• Downsize what you put on your plate. Fill two thirds of it with fruits, vegetables, and grains, and one third with poultry, fish, or meat.

Take advantage of the season
Summer is prime time for the best fruits and vegetables.

• Try grilling vegetables, such as pearl onions, mushrooms, zucchini, and bell peppers. Most vegetables can be grilled by cutting them into bite-size pieces and threading onto skewers. Grilled fruit kabobs are also a great summertime dessert!
• Buy fresh herbs (or grow them). They can bring out the flavor in food. If you have extra, chop them up, put them in an ice-cube tray and fill it with water. Once the herbs freeze, pop them out and put them in a plastic bag. Defrost by running them under hot water.
• At your next barbecue, skip the chips and serve crunchy carrot sticks, bell pepper strips, and broccoli with a low-fat dip.
• Head to the beach with a veggie-filled picnic lunch. In addition to turkey or lean ham on whole-wheat bread, pack fruits and vegetables such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, grapes, plums, and cherries.

• If you are going camping or hiking, unsweetened dried fruits, such as cranberries, raisins, apricots, and figs, are easy to tote in your backpack.
• Avoid food dyes and excess sugar, and make your own frozen fruit pops at home. Freeze 100-percent fruit juice in small paper cups (add diced-up fruit to the juice before freezing for extra fiber and nutrients). Insert wooden sticks when the juice is slushy enough to hold the stick upright. When the juice is frozen solid, peel the paper off and serve.

• Keep containers of fruits and vegetables washed and cut into bite-sized pieces in the refrigerator. Have them as snacks instead of chips and cookies.

Above all, remember that moderation is the key. If you crave a juicy cheeseburger, try to avoid the fries or heavy potato salad. Pick and choose wisely, and you can enjoy your summer foods and stay healthy at the same time.

SOURCES:
• Helpguide.org. How to reduce your risk and protect your brain. Accessed: 03/30/2011
Stay Cool When Exercising in the Summer Heat

Stay safe while exercising in the summer heat.

It’s time to take your winter treadmill routine outdoors to the parks. The days are long and warm. The trails radiate heat. Summer is here and you’re prepared to sweat! But before you lace up your running shoes, read these eight tips to help keep you cool.

Safety tips

Heat-related illness is serious. But that doesn’t mean you’re doomed to a summer spent exercising in the air-conditioned gym. Try these safety tips before you step foot out in the sun:

1. Exercise in the early morning or late evening hours. The temperature is the coolest at this time. Avoid exercising midday because it’s the hottest part of the day.

2. Drink up! Do not wait until you are thirsty to start hydrating. Make sure to drink adequate amounts of fluids. If you are exercising for an extended period of time, you may need to replace the salt and minerals lost through sweat. If you are on diuretics (water pills) or a low-salt or fluid-restricted diet, talk to your doctor first about your specific fluid needs.


4. Protect yourself from the sun. Wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher. Try to exercise in the shade. Play tennis on a court shaded by the trees or take a walk in a wooded park.

5. Rest early and often. Take breaks in shady areas.

6. Gradually get used to the heat. It takes 7 to 10 days for your body to adapt to the change in temperature. Start by exercising for short time, at a low intensity. Save long, hard workouts until after you’re acclimated to the summer air.

7. Mind the weather. Do not exercise on the hottest days. Keep an eye on the heat index. The heat index is a calculation of the temperature and humidity. It measures “how hot it really feels” outside. Be cautious when the heat index gets above 80 degrees. Consider working out indoors. Walk around a shopping mall or do a workout DVD in your air-conditioned home.

8. Stop if you don’t feel well. If you have any of the warning signs of heat-related illness, stop your workout right away.
How the heat hurts you
Each person has his own personal air-conditioning system inside his or her body. When you get hot, you sweat. Perspiration is the body’s way of cooling off. As sweat evaporates, the body releases heat. But when you get extremely hot or in high humidity, sweating may not be enough. The body then has to work extra hard to keep its temperature down. Eventually, the body will be unable to rid itself of the excess heat. This can lead to a high body temperature and heat-related illness.

Recognize warning signs
The heat can take its toll on your body and make you sick. Heat-related illness can even be life-threatening. Learn how to spot signals of heat-related illness. They range from cramps to muscle spasms because of lost nutrients to more serious signs like dizziness or fainting.

Heat exhaustion is a warning sign that your body cannot keep itself cool. Stop exercising right away. Heat exhaustion is dangerous and may lead to heat stroke. Symptoms include:
- Excessive thirst
- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dehydration

Heat stroke is life-threatening. Stop exercising right away and call 9-1-1 for any of the following symptoms:
- Unusual behavior, hallucinations or confusion
- Fainting
- Seizures
- Fever of 104 degrees F or greater

Seek immediate medical attention if you or someone else:
- Is vomiting and unable to keep fluids down
- Has dizziness or lightheadedness
- Looks very ill or is not getting better
- Has symptoms of heat exhaustion

Heat illness is more likely to occur in people who
- Are 65 or older
- Infants and children up to age four
- Have chronic illnesses
- Are obese

If possible; move to a cool place, cool the body down and drink fluids.

Always check with your doctor before you take your exercise routine to the great outdoors.

SOURCES:
Summertime means more time to play outdoors. It also means parents should be extra careful keeping kids healthy in the sun and heat. Children will have a much happier summer if they avoid heat stress and too much sun.

### Sunburn

To prevent sunburn, consider your child's age:

- **Keep babies under 6 months of age out of the sun.** Dress infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats that shade the face and neck. Make sure to always apply sunscreen when your child is outdoors.
- **Test a small area of skin** before applying sunscreen and watch for any reaction.
- **Call your doctor at once if your baby gets sunburned** and is younger than 1 year of age.

**All parents should:**

- **Apply sunscreen** at least 30 minutes before letting kids go outside, even on cloudy days. Use an SPF of at least 15. Make sure it is water-resistant or waterproof. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours and after swimming or sweating.
- **Cover them up.** Make sure your children wear hats with 3-inch brims or bills facing forward. Dress them in clothes made of cotton with a tight weave. Have them wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of ultraviolet rays.
- **Keep kids in the shade whenever possible, and limit their sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.**
- **Use extra sun protection near water and sand.** They reflect ultraviolet rays and may cause your child to burn more quickly.

### Heat Stress

When kids are busy playing on a hot summer day, they lose a lot of fluids. Children's bodies are more sensitive to heat stress than adults’. This can put them at risk for heat-related illnesses. To prevent dehydration and overheating:

- **Make sure children are well hydrated before they begin a prolonged activity.** Also make sure they drink during play. Cool tap water or flavored sports drinks are good choices.
- **Have them wear light-colored, lightweight clothing with no more than one layer of absorbent material.** This allows sweat to evaporate and cool the body. Have kids change out of sweaty garments and into dry clothes.
- **Shorten practices and games when temperatures are higher than 75 degrees.** Make sure children take frequent water breaks.
- **Shorten activities lasting 15 minutes or longer whenever heat and humidity reach high levels.**
- **Let your child get used to the heat.** When starting a strenuous exercise program or visiting a warmer climate, limit the intensity and length of activity. Gradually increase it over the next 10 to 14 days.

With your help, your kids can have a cool, happy, healthy summer.

**SOURCES:**