



eat crunchy veggies.

Wellness News July 2014, Volume 5, Issue 7

healthy changes
everything:



BlueShield
of Northeastern New York

Plan a Healthy Vacation

Summer vacation season is here! Here are some health and wellness tips for your summer break:

- Be safe when operating recreational motor vehicles (boats, motorcycles, jet skis). Read safety manuals and follow all laws specific to those activities. Never operate machinery while under the influence of alcohol.
 - Stay active. Find activities that you enjoy (e.g., hiking, biking, swimming, running, summer sports, kayaking, walking, etc.), and try to do at least one activity per day.
 - Control meal portions. Dining out during vacation can pack the pounds on fast. Restaurant portions are usually double or triple the recommended portion size. Try eating half the meal and getting the other half to go. Remember to pick meals that are balanced with lean protein (chicken/white fish), complex carbohydrates (whole grain breads/sweet potatoes/whole grain pasta), and plenty of vegetables.
 - Control alcohol consumption. Alcohol is high in calories and triggers salt and fat cravings, so limit your intake to one or two drinks per day. And remember to drink plenty of water!
- Warm-up and stretch before activities. You are less likely to injure yourself if you have increased blood flow and oxygen to the muscles being used. This is especially true if you are new to the sport/activity, or if it's something you haven't done in years, such as water skiing, wind surfing, rock climbing, fly fishing, etc.
 - Wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water to help protect against a variety of illnesses. If you are traveling to highly populated areas, be sure to maintain proper hand hygiene and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth to prevent infection.
 - Take time to breathe. Vacation is an excellent time to refresh and recuperate from everyday stressors. Take time each day to go for a walk, observe wildlife, or read a good book. It's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of planning what you are going to do during vacation, but don't forget to spend a little time recharging your batteries.

Did you know?

Over 60% of employed vacationers expect that they will have to work in some capacity during their time off.

Do one thing.

Vacations are linked not only to better health and well-being, but also improved productivity and job performance. Set boundaries for what work you will and will not do during your vacation, and make sure that you communicate those boundaries with your boss.



Live Fit – Get Back to Your Resolutions

The year is halfway over. Now is a great time to reassess your goals and evaluate your progress toward those New Year's resolutions. Get back on track by implementing the following healthy lifestyle tips:

- Use a food and exercise journal - record your goals and track what works and what doesn't
- Allow for "forbidden foods" in small quantities on special occasions
- Aim for eight hours of sleep each night
- Be aware of the stressors in your life and how they affect your health, including mood, energy level, and appetite
- Stay active! Strive for at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day and at least two days of strength training per week
- Always remember balance, variety, and moderation are the keys to a healthy life style

Did you know?

Only 8% of people who make New Year's resolutions are successful in reaching their goals.

Do one thing.

To help improve your success rate, call a health coach at 1-877-878-8785, option 2.

Get Fit – Stretching Know-How

The term "flexibility" relates to the ability to bend without breaking, moving a joint through its complete range of motion. Regular stretching can help to increase flexibility and range of motion. Static stretching is safe and effective for most people. Static stretching involves gradually stretching a muscle to the end of its range of motion to a point of tightness, but not discomfort.

Benefits of flexibility training include:

- Increased ease of movement at the joints
- Increased blood flow (and thus the flow of nutrients) to the working muscles
- Decreased soreness from exercise and/or repeated use
- Decreased muscle tension
- Prevention/reduction of injury

Did you know?

Holding a stretch for 15-30 seconds is most effective in decreasing pain and increasing range of motion.

Do one thing.

Make stretching part of your daily routine. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends flexibility exercises be performed five to seven times per week.

Eat Fit – Cherry Season is Here

Grabbing a handful of cherries to enjoy as a snack will benefit more than just your taste buds. These fruits are packed with antioxidants and nutrients including melatonin, potassium, vitamins A, C, E and K, as well as most of the B vitamins.

The health benefits of eating cherries include:

- Reduced blood pressure
- Improved sleep
- Decreased muscle soreness
- Decreased risk of cancer
- Increased metabolism
- Decreased uric acid and incidence of gout

Did you know?

One cup of sweet cherries contains less than 100 calories.

Do one thing.

Choose cherries that are dark in color; the riper they are, the more nutrition they pack!

Zu-Canoes



Ingredients (makes 4 servings):

- 2 medium 2-inch-wide zucchinis
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon white-wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot
- 1 cup quartered grape tomatoes
- 1/2 cup diced mozzarella cheese, preferably fresh
- 1/4 cup thinly-sliced fresh basil

Preparation:

1. Trim both ends off the zucchinis; cut in half lengthwise. Cut a thin slice from the back of each zucchini so that each half sits flat. Scoop out the pulp, leaving a 1/4-inch shell. Finely chop the pulp; set aside.
2. Place the zucchini halves in a microwave-safe dish. Sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cover and microwave on high until tender-crisp, 3 to 4 minutes. (Or steam in a steamer basket over 1 inch of boiling water in a large skillet or pot.)
3. Whisk oil, vinegar, shallot, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Add tomatoes, cheese, basil, and the reserved zucchini pulp; toss to combine. Divide the filling among the zu-canoes.

Nutrition (per serving):

87 calories; 4g fat; 3mg cholesterol; 7g carbohydrates; 7g protein; 2g fiber; 408mg sodium; 454 mg potassium.

Source: EatingWell, July/August 2011