



How To Have A Healthy Summer

The summer is a time of rest, excitement and fun for many of us. However, summer also carries with it several hazards which can affect our health if we do not take some simple precautions. As we are in full swing with gorgeous sunny days and warm weather, it also brings the threat of sunburns, allergies, bug bites, and other potential health complications.

Below are some tips that may help you enjoy a problem-free summer.

Protect yourself from UVA rays



Sunlight is good for the body, but like everything, too much of it is bad for you. Sun rays are an excellent source of vitamin D and can greatly enhance your mood. There are two types of sun rays: UVA and UVB.

UVA rays penetrate deep into the skin's layers and provide that tan so many people seek. However, UVA rays also eventually damage the immune system.

Dr. Shivakumar, MD, who works at a family practice at Gottlieb Memorial Hospital, said: "UVA damage may make it harder for the body to fight off diseases and can lead to skin cancers like melanoma, squamous cell and basal cell cancers."

Put simply, **spending too much time in the sun results in overexposure to UVA rays which can eventually cause life threatening skin cancers.**

There are more than 1 million new cases of skin cancer in the US every year, many of them caused by too much exposure to UVA rays.

To protect yourself from UVA rays you should be using sunscreen with at least SPF 30. Dr. Shivakumar added: "Apply broad - spectrum sunscreen (blocks UVA/UVB) with at least SPF 30. You should be applying a "shot glass" amount from head to toe and reapply after swimming or sweating."

Doctors at The American Medical Association said that to prevent skin cancer people should wear sunscreen and avoid too much sun, no matter what color your skin is.

Make sure to apply enough sunscreen too. Adults need the equivalent of a shot glass full of sunscreen to fully protect themselves.

Drink Plenty of Water

Before stepping outdoors make sure that you are hydrated. It is crucial to drink plenty of water and replenish all the lost fluids. During the summer months we go outdoors more, we are more physically active, and it is much hotter - all factors that dehydrate us.

One caution: **drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine can actually increase fluid output, making it much harder to be properly hydrated.**

Signs of dehydration include:

- dry mouth
- headache
- light-headedness
- dizziness
- little or no urination
- constipation.

Dehydration is a major cause of:

Heat stroke - when body temperature rises higher than 40.6 °C (105.1°F). To avoid heatstroke wear lightweight clothing, avoid direct sunlight, use air conditioning, drink cold water, and avoid heavy meals.

Seizures - dehydration leads to a lack of electrolytes. Electrolytes send electrical signals from cell to cell. When electrolyte levels fall too low these signals don't function properly, leading to involuntary muscle contractions.

Cerebral Edema - may occur when you drink after being dehydrated. The body sends water to the cells, however, it can send too much causing cells to swell and rupture.



Severe dehydration can also lead to kidney failure, coma, and even death.

Don't just Sit Around, Go Out and Exercise

For many people, spending the summer indoors lounging around may seem like a good idea, but why not see it as an opportunity to engage in some physical activities.

"For those of you sedentary vacationers, consider spending just two to four hours a day doing things like walking the city streets, exploring a nature preserve, going to a zoo, biking along the ocean or taking a leisurely rowboat ride." said Dr. Shivakumar.



Not only are these activities good for mental health and warding off obesity and becoming fit, other benefits of physical activity include:

Reduced risk of breast cancer - data published in *Cancer Epidemiology* revealed that breast cancer risk can be reduced through exercise and physical activity.

Reduced risk of psoriasis - psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory skin disorder which causes redness, scaling, and irritation. A study published in *Archives of Dermatology*, showed that American women who engaged in energetic, physical activity were at a reduced risk of psoriasis.

Better cognition in children and older adults - there are a number of studies now showing that aerobic exercise can increase the size of critical brain structures and improve cognition in children and older adults.

Better sleep - a previous study found that people sleep much better and feel more alert during the day if they exercise for at least 150 minutes a week.

