

Newsflash

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Kindness Lifts Your Mood

Practicing quiet kindness – silently wishing others well or thinking about the hopes and feelings you share with those around you – could raise your own spirits. In a study of 496 adults, those who did this during a 12-minute walk felt happier, more connected, caring, and empathetic, compared with a control group that simply noticed people's clothing, hair and makeup. The study involved young adults but the results may hold true for older adults, too.

Source: Journal of Happiness Studies



Exercising With Achy Knees

If you find it difficult to exercise because of knee osteoarthritis (OA), a water workout may be a good option. In a recent Finnish study of older women with mild knee OA, those who took a 1-hour water workout class three times weekly for four months lost 2½ pounds of body fat, increased their walking speed significantly, and became more physically active in daily life. A year later, they were still walking faster but had not maintained the fat loss.

Source: Osteoarthritis and Cartilage

Previous issues of Newsflash
can be viewed under "PBM
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When to Go Organic:

How to shop smarter (and healthier) at the supermarket

Organic food as a rule costs more than conventional food, but is it worth the extra money? We want consumers to appreciate that by buying organic food, they are helping to support farming methods for plants and animals that are healthier for the earth's soil and water supply in the long run. Here's our take on which organic choices will provide the most immediate benefit and why.

Fruit and Vegetables...to avoid long-term exposure to residues (Priority Level: High)

Rinsing conventional fruits and vegetables doesn't effectively reduce pesticide residues that are left behind. But organic produce isn't treated with synthetic fertilizers or most synthetic pesticides in the first place.

Poultry...to discourage the routine use of antibiotics and questionable feed (Priority level: Medium to High)

Organic poultry is almost always raised without the routine use of antibiotics. The widespread use of those drugs in food animals is triggering a rise in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. And organic birds can't be fed poultry litter (a mixture of droppings, spilled feed, and feathers) or arsenic drugs. Organic birds are just as likely to harbor bacterial contamination as nonorganic poultry, but a smaller percentage of the bacteria tend to be antibiotic-resistant.

Beef...for the nutritional benefits (Priority level: Medium to High)

As with chicken, organic cattle aren't raised with routine antibiotics. But for optimal nutritional benefits, look for organic meat that's also labeled "American Grassfed Approved" or "USDA Process Verified grass-fed," which guarantees that the animal was raised on a diet of 99 percent grass and forage and had seasonal access to a pasture. Studies suggest that meat from such animals might provide more health benefits than meat from animals fattened on a conventional diet of grain.

Dairy...for the nutritional benefits (Priority level: Medium to High)

Research has found that organic milk contains about 60 percent more heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids than nonorganic versions, a benefit that also extends to cheese and yogurt. Organic dairy cows aren't treated with growth hormones and must eat an organic diet that doesn't contain animal byproducts.

Packaged food...to avoid consumption of food additives and synthetic dyes (Priority level: Low to Medium)

At least 90 percent of ingredients in certified organic processed foods must themselves be organic. But a "made with organic" label means that at least 70 percent of the product's ingredients must be organic.

Organic packaged foods might be most important for children because the foods are not allowed to contain synthetic dyes, which have been linked to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Natural food colorings include annatto, beets, and turmeric. But there's little evidence that conventional packaged goods are a health hazard to adults – except perhaps their waistlines. Remember, organic cookies are still cookies.

Seafood (Priority level: Not applicable)

Organic labels on fish and shellfish are meaningless, because there are no government-approved organic standards for seafood.






So Long, Summer Bummers

Do not let the heat, stinging insects, and more keep you from enjoying the great outdoors this season

Summer brings many joys: warm and sunny weather, a riot of plants and flowers that can turn your garden into a paradise, and plenty of daylight in which to enjoy it all.

But all the perks come with downsides. These might include problems that become more common as you get older – such as taking a prescription or over-the-counter medication that makes your skin more sensitive to the sun, or becoming easily fatigued by heat and humidity.

Fortunately, with a few simple precautions, it's easy to avoid some of summer's most common annoyances and hazards. Here's how – along with tips for what to do when you encounter them.

HAZARD	PREVENT IT	MANAGE IT
Stinging insects, such as bees and wasps 	Avoid flowery-scented soaps/perfumes. When eating outside, keep close watch on food and drinks. Bees and wasps can land there – and can even hide in straws – and you don't want your mouth to be stung. Wear light colors; dark and bright ones may attract bugs.	Don't swat at a stinging insect; simply get away quickly. If stung, remove the stinger by wiping it with gauze or scraping it with your fingernail...this may help limit the dose of venom you receive. Wash with soap and water, and apply a cold compress for swelling. Use an EpiPen right away if you're allergic; call 911 if you have a reaction and don't have one.
Too much sun 	Wear sunscreen on exposed skin whenever you're outside. Stay in the shade when possible. Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether any prescription or OTC meds you're taking, such as diuretics, antibiotics, and painkillers, can cause sun sensitivity. Older adults may be taking two or more of these, raising sunburn risks.	If you get sunburned, try a cool shower or bath, and apply moisturizer to your damp skin afterward. An anti-inflammatory pain killer can help with swelling and pain. Stay out of the sun for a while to let your skin heal. If you're taking drugs for chronic conditions and you've repeatedly experienced sunburn, see your doctor, who may be able to adjust your regimen to reduce sun sensitivity.
Problem plants: Poison Ivy, Oak, and Sumac 	Know what poisonous plants look like, and avoid them. Poison Ivy and Oak are vines or bushes with leaves grouped in threes and may have yellow or green flowers and white, yellowish-green, or amber berries. Poison sumac is a wood shrub with leaves grouped in sets of 7 to 13 and arranged in pairs, and may have pale-yellow or cream-colored berries.	If you think you brushed up against a poisonous plant, go inside and immediately wash your hands and body. Also change and wash your clothes. The plant's rash-causing substance can linger on unwashed clothes, allowing you to spread it around your home. Treat the rash with hydrocortisone or a wet compress.
Biting bugs: mosquitoes, ticks and ants 	Keep mosquitoes and ticks from biting by using insect repellent...25-30 percent deet is recommended. In grassy areas or in the woods, tuck your long pants into your socks, and consider treating your clothes and shoes with permethrin. Check yourself for ticks when you come in. If fire ants are a problem where you live, wear closed-toed shoes and gloves when working in your yard, and steer clear of ant mounds	Remove an attached tick with fine-tipped tweezers. If you develop a fever or rash, see a doctor. These could be signs of a tick-borne illness, such as Lyme disease. For mosquito or ant bites, clean the site with soap and water. For itching, take an antihistamine, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl and generic), or use topical hydrocortisone cream.
Weather woes: heat and humidity 	In humid weather, it's more difficult to stay cool because your sweat doesn't evaporate as quickly as it normally does. And certain medications, including diuretics can make you more sensitive to the heat. Keep yourself hydrated – make it a habit to sip water throughout the day. Try to keep your body temperature normal by staying in air-conditioned spaces or taking cooling baths or showers, especially if you feel nauseated, weak, or headachy.	If your body heats up too much, you risk experiencing a potentially fatal condition that occurs when your body temperature reaches 103° or higher. Know the signs of heat stroke: fainting, confusion, nausea, and not sweating in spite of heat. If you suspect it in someone, call 911 immediately, and start cooling down the person by any means – spraying them with a garden hose or getting them into a cool shower or a tub of cool water.

Compliments of July 2019 ON HEALTH Consumer Reports

Easy Ways to Add Fruit to Your Diet

In addition to throwing an apple in your lunch bag or slicing a banana on top of cereal, here are some other ideas for increasing your fruit intake that you may not have thought of:

Make it your first stop for a sweet. If you want dessert, reach for a peach or apple before digging into a piece of cake. The fruit may satisfy the craving on its own. If not, go ahead and have the cake knowing you got an extra serving of fruit in.

Fill up a bowl. Either keep a bowl of whole fruit on your kitchen countertop or one of cut fruit in the refrigerator. If it's in view, you'll be more likely to reach for it.

Add it to savory foods. Blueberries in a salad? Pineapple on pizza? Roasted pears as a side dish for chicken or pork? You just increased your fruit servings.

Swap in a fruit cup. When you dine out, ask whether you can have a side of fruit instead of french fries with your sandwich or hash browns with your eggs.

Toss them on the grill. That adds a smoky depth to fruit such as peaches, plums, pears, mango, and pineapple.

