

summer 2023

wellness matters



Choices for healthy living • nutrition • fitness • well-being • health



RIDING THE HEAT WAVE

The Government of Canada estimates that the number of extremely hot days is expected to more than double in some parts of the country over the next 30 years; and while that may be great news for sun lovers, it could pose problems for the young and the elderly.

Children absorb a lot of heat but aren't very good at losing it by sweating, leaving them vulnerable to heat stroke. As for the elderly, underlying health issues (breathing, heart or kidney problems) may be exacerbated by hot weather.

There are two things that are essential to consider: trying to prevent the onset of illness by protecting loved ones from extreme heat and watching for symptoms of heat illness.

London, Ontario-based pediatrician Dr. Michelle Ponti says the challenge facing parents is "that kids don't recognize symptoms such as

thirst or being too hot," because they tend to push through all that while having fun.

"But preventing heat illness is relatively simple if you set time limits on them playing outside, and ensure they avoid the peak heat hours."

If being outside during peak hours is unavoidable—such as during a family picnic—then Ponti suggests "finding shade and bringing along sun hats, sunscreen, and plenty of liquids."

Ponti adds that these general guidelines are suitable for the elderly as well. "Again, the key is to prevent heat illness symptoms, which include dizziness, rapid heartbeat and nausea," she says. "If these symptoms occur, you should immediately move the sufferer to a cool place and provide plenty of liquids to drink, preferably water."

10 FAST FACTS

- 1 Old pillows can build up pollen, fungi, mould, bacteria and dust mites.** Change your pillow every year.
- 2 Drowning is a major cause of injury or death among children.** Enrol your kids in swimming lessons.
- 3 Fresh asparagus** is loaded with vitamin K, which is required to make proteins essential for bone formation.
- 4 If you have trouble sleeping,** avoid alcohol. It inhibits the deeper stages of sleep.
- 5 A deficiency in magnesium** has been linked to migraines, fibromyalgia, anxiety and attention deficit disorder.
- 6 It may take up to 12 weeks** after starting an exercise regimen to see measurable changes.
- 7 Don't put ice on a burn;** it can cause further tissue damage. Instead, hold the affected area under cool, running water.
- 8 High heels** shift the wearer's weight forward, requiring extra effort to keep the body straight.
- 9 Low air pressure** causes joint tissue to expand, which may explain why arthritics "feel" a change in the weather.
- 10 Rosehips** are a source of bioflavonoids and vitamins A and C.

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5 Healthy Summer Treats

Summer means festivals, beach trips and BBQs. And what's common at all of these activities? Food. Calgary, Alberta-based Kristyn Hall, dietitian and CEO of energizenuitrition.ca, says not all fun summer food has to be a nutritional write-off. Here are five of her top picks when the weather heats up:

Popsicles: These classic icy summer treats don't have to be frozen sugar and artificial colour on a stick. Make your own healthy pops by freezing fruit and yogurt smoothies in popsicle moulds.

Popcorn: Sold at most summer festivals, popcorn is a fibre-rich choice much lower in calories than typical salty snacks like fries or chips. Make your own popcorn at home before heading out for the event so you can control the amount of salt. Prepared in unsaturated oil or air-popped,

you can avoid the less healthy, solid saturated fat often used by commercial popcorn vendors.

Fresh-fruit desserts: Blueberry cobbler, a bowl of fresh strawberries topped with a little real whipped cream, poached peaches or a grilled fruit skewer are delicious dessert options that put fresh fruit centre stage.

Summer-ripe tomato salsa: Vine-ripened tomatoes, lime juice and a little cilantro are all it takes to make a fresh, nutrient-rich salsa. Served with all-natural corn tortilla chips, it's a healthy alternative to nachos.

Refreshing beverages: Avoid the liquid candy so abundant in pop, slushies, milkshakes and sugary iced coffees. Instead, opt for an energizing homemade beverage made with fresh juice, water and refreshing herbs.



summer recipe

Watermelon Mint Refresher

Serves: 2

Per serving: 117 calories, 0.5 g fat, 29 g carbohydrate, 1.6 g fibre, 2 g protein, 7 mg sodium

The combination of watermelon, fruit, citrus and herb in this blended drink will keep you sated even in the hottest temperatures.

INGREDIENTS

2½ cups	red-fleshed watermelon (seeded)
½ cup	100% orange juice
¼ cup	100% apple juice
2 tbsp	very finely chopped fresh mint or basil
Juice of 1 fresh lime	

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend; serve with mint leaves over ice cubes; for an added kick, add a splash of sparkling soda.

"He was a bold man that first ate an oyster."
—Jonathan Swift, satirist and poet

3 HABITS That Could be Slowing Your METABOLISM

Lack of exercise, late night snacking, insufficient water... these are some of the more commonly recognized metabolism killers. But do you have other habits that are impacting your basal metabolic rate?

Andrea Falcone, a registered dietitian and certified fitness professional from Ontario, shares three habits that could be messing with your metabolism.

1. Long-term dieting. "People who consistently under-consume calories are at risk of slowing their metabolism," says Falcone tells *Wellness Matters*. "Your body needs a certain amount of energy to maintain regular functions. When it doesn't receive adequate calories, it goes into starvation mode and will try and hold on to every calorie you consume."

2. Eating breakfast late. "Is breakfast the most important meal of the day? No. Every



meal is important. But we have breakfast after a six- to eight-hour fast. The longer you wait to eat breakfast, the slower your metabolism ends up being. Ideally eat your breakfast within 15 to 45 minutes of waking."

3. Too much cardio, not enough strength training. "It's a common misconception that in order to lose weight you need to do cardio, and though this supports weight loss, it doesn't increase your metabolic rate. Effective strength training will increase your muscle mass, which will in turn boost your resting metabolism. You'll burn calories just sitting still!"

TIPS

3 Ways to Kickstart Your Metabolism

- 1. Eat protein with every meal.** Whether it's an egg, nuts, seeds or Greek yogurt, protein digests more slowly than carbohydrates and keeps your metabolism revved longer.
- 2. Choose lower glycemic index foods.** Natural foods with high fibre content like fruit and vegetables release energy to your body more slowly.
- 3. Get some sleep.** Sleep deprivation can lead to difficulty managing blood sugar levels, which in turn can jeopardize your metabolism if poor food choices are made.

Start Your Day on **the Right Track**



- **Eggs** are undeniably healthy and delicious. Studies have shown that eating eggs at breakfast increases feelings of fullness, reduces the caloric intake at the next meal and helps maintain steady blood sugar and insulin levels.
- **Greek yogurt** is made by straining whey and other liquid from the milk curds, which produces a creamier yogurt that is more concentrated in protein.
- **Coffee** is high in caffeine, which has been shown to improve mood, alertness and mental performance.
- **Oatmeal** is the best breakfast choice for cereal lovers. Its unique fibre, called beta-glucan, can help to reduce cholesterol.
- **Chia seeds** are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and a high source of fibre.
- **Berries** are packed with antioxidants and are lower in sugar than other fruits, yet higher in fibre.
- **Green tea** contains a healthy dose of polyphenols and antioxidants. It contains caffeine, which improves alertness and mood, and raises the metabolic rate.

"The bravest people are the ones that don't mind looking like cowards."

—T.H. White, author



Meditation made easy

Meditation usually inspires images of people sitting in a crossed-legged lotus position, oblivious to the minutes ticking by.

But nothing could be more misleading, according to Geoffrey Soloway, a B.C.

co-founder and chief training officer for MindWell-U. “Extended sessions were for those suffering severe stress and chronic pain,” he tells *Wellness Matters*. “For the average person, a five-minute daily session provides enormous benefits—and even five minutes takes effort to master.”

Soloway is an instructor of mindfulness, which is loosely defined as meditation that conditions practitioners to be fully aware of everything happening around them. “It’s the opposite of our minds taking flight, which leads to obsessive thoughts, stress, and a host of other problems,” he says.

Like physical exercise, one’s meditative powers can be developed gradually—and mindfulness can be performed in any situation. “That’s because it’s about focusing on what you’re doing,” says Soloway. “Driving is a great example: you should be completely aware of the cars around you, the grip of your steering wheel, the noises of traffic, and so forth.”

But how can you work toward achieving five minutes of mindfulness each day?

“Start by taking five deep breaths as soon as you wake up, before thinking of your to-do list,” says Soloway. He also advises:

- Identify and contemplate the mood you are in when you wake up;
- Notice the taste, smell, and temperature of your first sip of coffee;
- Extend this to the sensory attributes of getting into your car on your way to work.

“By gradually extending these practices, you’ll be on the path to being better connected to your body. Our grandparents had a different way of putting it: ‘Take the time to stop and smell the roses.’”

Putting **THE SPIN** on Workouts

With more spin studios and classes to try than ever before, it seems like everyone is cycling indoors—and for good reason.

“Spinning is a low-impact exercise that is open to anybody, regardless of fitness level or age,” says Kim Donnelly, former head coach and owner of Toronto spin studio CYKL.

Spin-goers can control their bike’s resistance and difficulty of the workout, allowing newcomers to work within their own ability. But that doesn’t mean you won’t get a fantastic cardio workout. According to Donnelly, when participating in a group class with other like-minded people, you are more likely to push yourself a little harder than if you were riding alone.

“Not only will your fitness improve, but this builds confidence and a sense of accomplishment.”

Ready to ride? Donnelly recommends beginner and experienced cyclists alike should do their homework when choosing a studio. Some classes use weights and coordinated moves, while others take a more traditional training approach. The type of bike may also differ.

The people and atmosphere are important too. “Look for a studio that has a community you feel like you could belong to,” says Donnelly. Most studios have a first-class discount. Donnelly encourages people to try several studios before committing to one.



“Laughter is sunshine. It chases winter from the human face.”

—Victor Hugo, poet

Dry Needling

Suffering from muscular pain like a strain, postural problem, or overuse injury? Dry needling may be an effective treatment for you.

Functional dry needling (acupuncture) is “the insertion of solid filament needles into the body followed by manipulation of that needle designed to illicit a response from the tissue,” explains physiotherapist Drew Teskey. The goal is to release a trigger point – a band of tight dysfunctional tissue within a muscle.



Physiotherapists, acupuncturists, naturopathic doctors and physicians can administer dry needling. Expect the treatment to be uncomfortable, cautions Teskey. Patients are usually sore for 24 to 72 hours after treatment. Once the discomfort subsides the benefits are noticeable – often significant pain reduction and increase in range of motion.

For best results, Teskey encourages patients to seek out a practitioner who will identify the root cause of your problem and use dry needling alongside other complementary treatment techniques.



Discover Canada's National Parks This Summer

The sunshine is finally upon us, and that means it's time to make the most of Canada's beautiful national parks. And you don't have to love hiking: parks.canada.ca suggests activities like wildlife watching, camping, stargazing and sports, along with culinary, historical and Indigenous experiences.

Visiting the national parks is a great way to explore the country, stay active and check something off your summer bucket list. Here are four you don't want to miss:

Glacier National Park

Parks Canada travel media officer Eric Magnan says British Columbia's Glacier National Park is a year-round outdoor enthusiast's paradise. Adventure-seekers can “scale jagged mountain peaks, camp next to roaring glacier-fed rivers or mountain bike ride beneath old-growth trees of the world's only inland cedar rainforest,” according to Magnan.

Thousand Islands National Park

Located between Kingston and Brockville, Ontario, Thousand Islands National Park consists of 21 islands and two mainland

properties. “Explore the park's secluded bays by kayak, discover rare species of turtles and birdlife alongside undulating hiking trails or spend a night riverside in the oTENTik—a cross between a tent and a rustic cabin accommodations,” suggests Magnan.

Prince Edward Island National Park

“Prince Edward Island National Park is a giant playground for kids and adults of all ages,” says Magnan. It boasts seven sandy beaches and over 50 kilometers of hiking and cycling trails alongside red cliffs and wind-sculpted dunes. Visitors can hike woodlands and overlook ponds while keeping watch for wildlife, enjoy a picnic by a lighthouse, build a sandcastle and roast marshmallows over a campfire at sunset.

Pukaskwa National Park

Looking for an alternative to Vancouver Island's West Coast Trail? Magnan recommends the Coastal Hiking Trail, a challenging 60-kilometer trail in Ontario's Pukaskwa National Park. Don't let that intimidate you: the park also offers shorter day hikes, beaches and geocaching adventures.

“Don't eat anything your grandmother wouldn't recognize as food.”

—Michael Pollan, writer

Kiddie Health

Let's face it: summer may be a great break for the kids, but it also exposes them to what child educators refer to as "the summer slide," whereby the holidays represent nothing less than a break in learning and a loss of reading and other skills.

How severe is the problem? Oxford Learning estimates that over the summer, two months of reading skills are lost, as are 2.6 months of math skills, with the losses being recognized as early as Grade 1.

Oxford also estimates that by the end of Grade Six, students who have suffered summer learning loss are an average of two years behind their peers, and that it can take six weeks in the fall for kids to re-learn old material.

Fortunately, keeping kids' minds as well as their bodies stimulated over the holidays is relatively simple, and experts agree that the first step is for parents to set a reading schedule—whether it is daily for 10 to 30 minutes, or just several times a week.



Otherwise, they say, it will be difficult to achieve the momentum necessary for young brains to absorb information.

The Canadian Paediatric Society strongly believes mental and physical exercise is a must during summer, and it encourages children to read and parents to organize outings to libraries, museums

and other venues. Oxford suggests teaching kids through your own tasks, such as baking a cake or fixing a bicycle.

To further promote proper cognitive development, the society advises parents to minimize and manage their kids' Internet screen time, prioritizing educational, age-appropriate and interactive programming.

Fuel for Body & Mind

Of all the diets out there, some are more legitimate than others. One, known as DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), has been shown to help reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Now it appears that DASH may also diminish the risk of developing depression.

The diet is high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, as well as nuts and beans, lean meats, fish and poultry. Like other healthy eating plans, it avoids dairy products that are high in sugar and saturated fats in favour of those that are fat-free or low-fat.

Research from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago examined the effects of the DASH diet compared to Mediterranean and traditional Western diets on almost 1,000 people with an average age of 81 for an average period of 6.5 years.



Participants were assessed yearly for symptoms of depression, such as whether they were bothered by things that didn't normally affect them, or feeling hopeless about the future.

Those who stuck most closely to DASH had an 11-per-cent lower risk of developing depression than those who followed it the least.

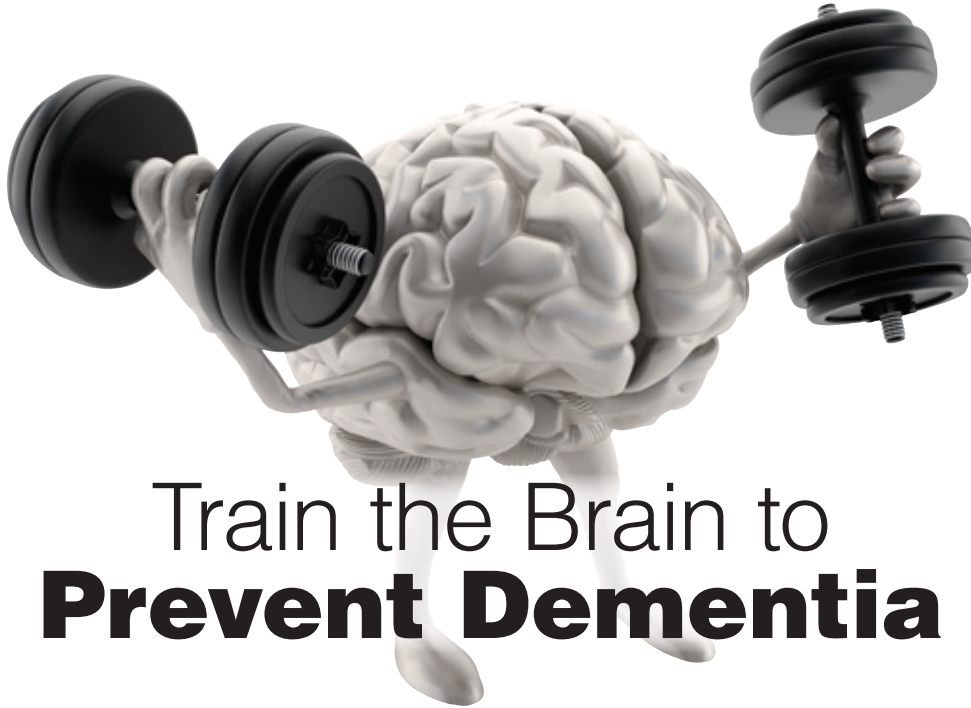
By contrast, people who closely followed a Western diet—which is high in saturated fats and red meats and low in fruits and vegetables—were more likely to develop depression.

"Depression is common in older adults and more frequent in people with memory problems, vascular risk factors such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol, or people who have had a stroke," the study's lead author, Dr. Laurel Cherian, a vascular neurologist and assistant professor in Rush's department of neurological sciences, explained in a release.

"Making a lifestyle change, such as changing your diet, is often preferred over taking medications, so we wanted to see if diet can be an effective way to reduce the risk of depression."

"If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves."

—Thomas Edison, inventor



Train the Brain to Prevent Dementia

It has long been recognized that the brain is like the heart in that it requires regular workouts to stay nimble – and a study led by the Indiana University School of Medicine is being credited for providing the first scientific evidence that brain training can help ward off dementia.

The study collected data from a project that monitored 2,802 healthy older adults over a 10-year period, as they aged from 74 to 84 on average. The participants were assigned to groups performing one of three different kinds of cognitive training: memory training, reasoning training or

speed of processing training. The speed of processing training was done by asking the participants to identify an object in the centre and at the periphery of a screen.

Of the 1,220 participants who completed the project, 260 developed dementia—but researchers say the risk of developing the disease was 29 percent lower for those who had done speed of processing training.

Nalini Sen, former director, research program at the Alzheimer Society of Canada, says the findings “are consistent with our message that actively exercising the brain, along with physical exercise, may reduce the onset of dementia.”

While the University of Indiana study’s brain twisters may seem overly complex to undertake regularly, Sen notes that “effective brain exercise is very simple and includes things like taking up a new hobby or even switching around one’s daily routine.”

Sen stresses that although exercising the brain can be done while on the Internet, “being socially active is something we strongly advocate because it rejuvenates the brain and also wards off depression, which is said to be a contributing factor to dementia.”

BABY BLUES

If you’re feeling blue after having a baby, you’re not alone.

Statistics show that around 13 per cent of moms in Canada experience postpartum depression, however, certified doula and birth professional Kimberly Daniels tells *Wellness Matters* that she believes the actual number is much higher, but due to the stigma that still surrounds it, many cases go unreported.

Understanding the difference between what is often referred to as baby blues and postpartum depression is essential.

“Baby blues is about adjusting to having a new baby. Parents will feel extreme fatigue. New mothers are going through a switch in hormones that can take about two weeks to become regulated. It’s the wild ride of having a new baby, and mood swings are common,” says Daniels, who also suffered from postpartum depression. However, she warns, if these feeling last for more than two weeks, it is time to seek professional help.

“Signs of postpartum can range from crying all the time or feeling angry to obsessive compulsive disorders and agoraphobia [an anxiety disorder characterized by symptoms of anxiety in situations where the person perceives the environment to be unsafe]. A lot of times mothers tend to isolate themselves and it’s the partner who picks up on it when it goes on for two weeks. And it can happen anytime in the first year.”



There are a number of preventive measures that new parents can take, which include surrounding yourself with support during that first year, having friends who will come by with a meal rather than just to hold the baby, and to be open and honest. However, Daniels warns that you can’t talk yourself out of postpartum depression, and to be aware of the signs and seek professional advice from peer support groups such as postpartum.org as soon as possible.

“The secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age.”

—Lucille Ball, comedian

Returning to work after a serious or lengthy illness can be daunting, but regular involvement in something productive (whether paid or not) helps bring structure and meaning to our lives. Work provides human interaction, a sense of self-worth and a schedule around which to plan other activities. Although Canadian employers have a duty to accommodate employees with disabilities, the nature of your illness may require you to re-evaluate the type of work that you are capable of or that you want to perform.

It is in your best interests to provide your employer with as much information as possible for them to be able to accommodate your needs. Be



Returning to Work

upfront with them about what you will need to be successful and provide any health-care information pertaining to those accommodations.

Before returning to work, you could practise what that will be like. Adjust your schedule so that you get up at

the same time you will when you are working. Dress in work clothes. Take transit to your workplace, or drive there in traffic to practise these skills.

In advance, you could also do activities that are similar to what you would do at work. Outside of your working hours,

practise the other activities that you will be performing—cooking, shopping, laundry, childcare—that are part of working life. This will help you transition back to your regular routines so that the change in your lifestyle is not too overwhelming.

TIPS

Some things to consider are:

- Does your health mean you may need to find a new line of work?
- Will you need to upgrade your skills?
- Are there volunteer activities or courses you could participate in while you are off work?
- Would part-time work or volunteering be an effective way to ease back into work?
- Is your workplace willing and able to offer flexible working hours?

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