

EAP NEWS



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How To Have A Healthy Summer Vacation

This summer, whether traveling across country or around the world, you'll have a more enjoyable vacation if you plan ahead to stay healthy.

"While you can't prevent every health problem, there's much you can do to keep you and your family healthy when you're away from home," says Elizabeth M. Whelan, M.P.H. Sc.D., president of the American Council on Science and Health in New York City.

Dr. Whelan suggests keeping the following health and safety tips in mind.

The healthy traveler

In addition to packing a small first-aid kit, be sure to pack your health-insurance card, a copy of your eyeglass prescription, copies of prescriptions for any medicines, and the addresses and phone numbers of all your physicians.

"If you have a chronic health problem, such as diabetes or heart disease, you may also want to carry a medical summary prepared by your doctor that includes an EKG," Dr. Whelan says. "You should wear an identifying bracelet or necklace if you have life-threatening allergies to medications."

You should also bring a supply of any medicine you take routinely. "It's particularly important to bring an adequate supply of your prescription medicines if you're traveling abroad," Dr. Whelan says. "Drug names, doses and availability differ in other countries, and in some parts of the world, drug safety and effectiveness may not be up to U.S. standards."

Packing a supply of over-the-counter remedies for common problems also can help. These include a pain reliever, an antacid, a laxative, an anti-diarrhea, an antihistamine and a cough/cold remedy.

If you're traveling by air, put your prescription drugs in your carry-on bag.

If you're traveling with young children, make sure all drugs are in containers with child-resistant caps. "It may be difficult to keep medicine out of reach the way you would at home," Dr. Whelan says. ○



The EAP is a free service for you and your eligible family members.

All EAP services are completely confidential.

Headache? Maybe It's Caused By What You Eat Or Don't Eat

Millions of Americans see their doctors each year because of frequent or severe headaches. One of the main headache triggers, especially for migraines, is diet.

Sometimes a headache is caused by a combination of dietary triggers, such as stress combined with coffee or wine. Some people get headaches when they drink coffee. Regular coffee drinkers get headaches when they quit.

To discover triggers or combinations that cause headaches, keep a food and drink journal for a couple of weeks. Note circumstances such as stress, exercise, and changes in sleep. When you have compiled the list, review it for connections to your headaches.

Common triggers include:

* High-fat foods, particularly those with the saturated fats found in meat or fast foods, and trans fats found in baked goods, margarine, and snack foods.

* Aged foods such as red wine, cheddar or blue cheese, deli meats, and overripe bananas.

* Food additives such as monosodium glutamate (MSG) and nitrates.

Author and dietitian Elaine Magee says foods that help to avoid headaches are those with omega-3 fatty acids such as olive oil and fish, and magnesium as found in almonds and peanut butter. ○

Sometimes a headache is caused by a combination of dietary triggers

Safety Tips For Grilling

The National Fire Protection Agency reports that about 1,000 structure fires and 3,400 outdoor fires were caused by barbecue grills in one recent year.

It's important to realize that safe grilling begins before the cooking starts.

With gas grills, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line to be sure it is working properly and not leaking. If you suspect a leak, put soapy water on the area and watch for bubbles to discover where it is. Never use a match to check for a gas leak, and never light the grill until the leak is fixed.

Position any grill on a level surface that is at least three feet away from other objects, including the house, shrubs, or bushes. Keep children and pets away from the cooking area.

When you are ready to barbecue, protect yourself with a heavy apron and oven mitts that fit well over your forearm.

When the party is over, store the grill outside and away from the house. Make sure the valves are turned off.

For charcoal grills, use only starter fluids designed for that purpose. Never use gasoline. If the fire is slow, add dry kindling. Don't add more liquid starter or you could cause a flash fire.

Remember to soak the coals with water before you put them in the trash.

Never use a barbecue grill indoors or in an unventilated space. It's a fire hazard and could cause carbon monoxide poisoning. ○

Easy Hummus Recipe

Drain a 15-ounce can of garbanzo beans (chickpeas). Save the liquid. Add 2 ounces of fresh sliced jalapeno peppers, 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, 3 cloves of minced garlic, and a teaspoon of olive oil (can be left out of the recipe). In a blender or food processor, combine all ingredients with 1 tablespoon of the reserved bean liquid and blend until smooth. This recipe makes 2 cups.

To Prevent Burnout, Manage Stress

A recent poll by CareerBuilder.com shows that more than half of workers interviewed said they are under a great deal of stress.

To prevent burnout, try to make changes in the way you cope with stress at home and at work.

Daniel Goleman, author of *Social Intelligence* (Bantam), notes that constant interaction with people who are anxious, angry, stressed, or traumatized activates your stress center. So, make time for yourself so you are not always just giving your time to others.

Learn to calm yourself. Goleman suggests breathing deeply, praying, or meditating. Practice in the morning.

Decide what you like and don't like about your work. Think of strategies to resolve problem areas. You might form an alliance with someone to address shared concerns.

Don't try for perfection. Sometimes dishes don't get washed and email has to wait for your reply. Don't be available 24/7.

Take care of your health. Eat well and exercise. As you see the benefits, you'll do more to keep healthy.

Get support. Find someone at work you can talk to. We all need the support of friends, Goleman says.

Decide if you'll do it. If your spouse or a friend wants you to do something and you really don't want to do it, don't. ○

Adding Fun To Your Walking Routine

Does just the concept of walking for fitness inspire you to settle back farther in your easy chair? If so, consider a change of perspective.

Any avid walker will swear walking is fun. "The secret is to just get started -- and to put a little purpose into your walk," according to dietitian and exercise specialist Jenna Colby, R.D., L.D., who co-wrote *The Complete Mall Walker's Handbook* with John H. Bland, M.D.

One compelling reason to start walking is the proven benefits to body and mind. "Brisk walking helps to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, therefore decreasing your risk of stroke and

heart attack," says Ms. Colby. "It decreases stress, can be helpful in weight management, hones your body, promotes good posture, gets the circulation going, increases energy and can be a real feel-good activity."

Ms. Colby offers these tips for putting fun into a walking routine:

- * Think of it as play, not exercise. It really is all in the mind. "There's something so good about getting outside and getting fresh air," she says.

- * Find a friend, and make it a social hour. Solo walking can be a welcome time of quiet reflection and regrouping, but many people enjoy walking regularly with a partner.

- * Pick a destination. "I happen to love walking for its own sake, but most people need a reason to do so," says Ms. Colby.

- * Reward yourself for walking. Treat yourself to a fruit smoothie or take a hot bath afterward.

Brisk walking helps to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels



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* Get a dog. "My husband lost 15 pounds when we got our dog. He wasn't necessarily trying to, but walking the pet automatically increased his physical activity," says Ms. Colby.

* Join a mall-walking group. You can find these formal, organized groups throughout the country – call the office of your local mall and ask if it has one. Mall walking is ideal in cold, hot, or wet weather.

"In general, people feel much better once they take up a walking routine. The hardest part is just getting started," says Ms. Colby.

She offers a success story: a woman whose doctor recommended she start walking to lose weight. The woman followed the advice and arranged to walk each morning with a neighbor. "She ended up walking in a local marathon – it took her six hours to complete it," says Ms. Colby. "She's actually running now with her neighbor. She feels significantly better, and her blood pressure and weight have gone down."

Walking for fitness

Although a stroll has its pleasures and benefits – you can amble at a gentle pace and window-shop (at the mall) or bird-watch (at the park) – to get fit, you must maintain a pace of at least 3.5 miles per hour. That's considered "moderate intensity" exercise, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

You should also aim to walk at least four days a week, and try to walk for at least 30 minutes each time, the CDC says.

If losing weight is one of your goals, keep in mind that the faster you walk, the more calories you will burn. A 150-pound walker will burn 240 calories per hour walking at 2 mph. That jumps to 320 calories per hour walking at 3 mph, and 440 calories per hour at 4½ mph.

The heavier you are, the more calories you burn, as well. So, a 150-pound walker will burn more calories during exercise than a 100-pound walker. ○

How to Use Your EAP

When help is needed call the office location most convenient for you. The office coordinator will ask for your name, employer and a brief description of your presenting concern. If an emergency exists you will be given immediate assistance. If your situation is not an emergency, you will be offered telephone assistance and/or in-person sessions to complete an assessment and make a referral for treatment if needed.

Meetings with your counselor are completely confidential. Your employer will not know you have used the EAP. No one will be provided any information about you without your written consent. Exceptions would occur only in the event of you being considered dangerous to yourself or someone else.

At the first appointment you should be prepared to give the counselor some background information to assist in formulating an action plan. Many people find it helpful to prepare a list of things they wish to discuss at each session. ○



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1-800-433-2320
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