



# Health & Wellbeing



## Lazing on a sunny afternoon???

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Long, lazy summer afternoons...the burgers smell great on the BBQ, the beers are chilling on ice, maybe friends have come over, maybe the kids are in and out of the paddling pool and you're working on your tan. Surely life doesn't get any better than this?!

Welcome summer! We had a long, grey spring but are finally being rewarded with a warm and sunny spell and long may it last! According to the Huffington Post, research indicates that there are wide-ranging health benefits to sunny days including improved mood, a greater propensity for joy, increased creativity, less chance of catching a cold and even your blood pressure drops thanks to increases in atmospheric pressure.

But are there certain aspects of summer that increase the likelihood of us making some poor health choices? This article explores how we can avoid the summer pitfalls of eating too many hot dogs, shelving the exercise routine and catching a tan worthy of a Mediterranean holiday without actually leaving the back garden!

### Eat, Drink and be Merry-within-reason

Barbequing food is actually a really healthy way to cook food as long as you don't smother the food in oil first. Burgers and sausages are always favourite but don't forget other lean options such as chicken and fish. Mix it up with marinades and don't forget that you can grill veggies too. Peppers, tomatoes, courgettes, onions all stand up well to being grilled and a quick burst of spray oil, will ensure they stay nice and juicy. Burgers can be homemade with ease using leaner beef or even pork and other meats which can reduce the fat content and give you the chance to add other ingredients for extra flavor such as chillies:



<https://www.slimmingworld.co.uk/recipes/ultimate-slimming-world-burger.aspx>

Summer days seem made for chilled lagers, fruit ciders and tropical cocktails but alcohol is very dehydrating in addition to being high in calories and creating extra work for your liver. If soft options feel a bit childish then consider more "grown-up" mocktails - refreshing without the headache in the morning! Or swap the Prosecco for a glass of chilled sparkling water with a slice of lime and a couple of raspberries. Here are some more suggestions:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/non-alcoholic-cocktail>

Many delicious fruits and veggies are in season over the summer and can be bought locally. Farmer's markets and "pick your own" farms can make buying fresh produce more fun if you have fruit-resistant children! Hand-picked strawberries taste far superior to the plastic-packaged, highly-travelled ones in the supermarket. Apricots, nectarines, plums, pears, cucumber, peppers, beetroot and lettuce are just some of the produce being harvested this month so be inspired to try new fruit and veg or look at new ways to serve old favourites:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/seasonal-calendar/all>

## Get up and Go!

When it comes to maintaining an exercise regime in the hot weather, the advice is to do it early (avoid the heat of the day), avoid excuses and then you can feel the benefits of the happy endorphins throughout the day. Take advantage of the nicer weather and get outside and walk to your work or when taking the kids to school. When you're at home, switch off your TV and tablet and find ways to play outdoors! Canoeing, kayaking, cycling, rambling or outdoor swimming are great ways to have fun and keep fit and require no previous experience. Of course, exercising in hot temperatures causes you to sweat more than usual, which increases the risk of dehydration. When you're dehydrated, it means your body loses more fluid than it's taking in. The mineral balance of your body is upset and it can't function as normal. Left unchecked, it can lead to kidney stones, constipation, heat exhaustion and heatstroke. You'll know if you're dehydrated, because many of the symptoms are obvious. Feeling thirsty is your first warning. If you're feeling a little parched, you've lost around 1% of the water in your body – lose 2% and you're officially dehydrated. You should also look out for signs such as feeling tired or faint, muscle cramps, infrequent urinating and very dark urine. To avoid getting dehydrated on a hot day, you simply need to drink a little more water than you would normally, particularly if you're sweating a lot. Increase the amount you drink to ten glasses of water a day to compensate for the warmer weather, in contrast to the usual eight glasses and increase this a little more if you're working out.



## Sun-safe and Tan-tastic

We're very good at remembering to put sun screen on our children – indeed, I knew a mum once who observed that a tanned child was an indication of gross parental negligence! However, we are not always so vigilant about our own sun protection. But the reality is that, even on dull days in the summer, we can still be affected by the sun's rays, so sunscreen is a must to reduce our risk of skin cancers and premature ageing. It's essential for your sunscreen to offer broad spectrum protection, which means that it offers effective protection against both UVA (ultraviolet A) and UVB (ultraviolet B) rays, the solar wavelengths proven to damage the skin. UVA rays penetrate the skin more deeply

than UVB, and are the chief cause of wrinkles, sagging and other signs of aging. UVB rays damage the skin's upper surface and are the main cause of sunburn. Both cause skin cancer.

Sun Protection Factor (SPF) is a measure of how long a person can stay in the sun before its UVB rays start to burn the skin. Let's say with no sunscreen, your skin starts to redden in 20 minutes. An SPF 30 will theoretically allow you to stay in the sun 30 times longer without getting burned. But keep in mind that SPF numbers are determined in a lab. In the real world, no matter what the SPF, sunscreens start to lose effectiveness over time, so it's important to reapply every two hours and after swimming or heavy sweating. Also note that above SPF 50 the amount of additional sun protection is negligible. The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends always using a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher – SPF 30 or higher for extended stays outdoors.

Have fun, stay hydrated, eat and drink wisely and well and have a fantastic summer!

## References and information

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/weather-and-health\\_us\\_570facd9e4b08a2d32b92ae9?guccounter=1](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/weather-and-health_us_570facd9e4b08a2d32b92ae9?guccounter=1)

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/heatwave-how-to-cope-in-hot-weather/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/exercise/art-20048167>

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