



Wellness-Fitness Program Newsletter

June 2008



Sun Safety Week - June 8-14

It's summer and you're probably anxious to spend more time enjoying the sunny outdoors. Enjoy the sun, but don't forget to protect yourself against its harmful rays.

More than half of all new cancers are skin cancers – and one in five Americans will get skin cancer in the course of their lifetime. Prevention is as close as a dollop of sunscreen. In fact, greater than 90% of all skin cancers are caused by sun exposure yet fewer than 33% of adults, adolescents, and children routinely use sun protection (Source: Skin Cancer Foundation).

What can you do to protect yourself?

Wear sunscreen every day if you plan to be outside for more than 20 minutes – even when it is cloudy. Reapply every two hours; more frequently after swimming or sweating heavily from exercise.

Don't skimp: Use about an ounce of sunscreen to cover any exposed skin.

Throw out old lotion: Sunscreen loses strength after about three years.

Know the number: Your sunscreen should have an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 and protect against UVB and UVA light.

What's in a ray?

UVB and UVA are types of ultraviolet radiation (UV) from the sun (and sun lamps) that has several harmful effects. They are particularly damaging to DNA and can cause melanoma and other types of skin cancer. In fact, UV radiation is responsible for most of the 8,000 deaths due to metastatic melanoma that occur annually in the United States.

UVB rays are the "burning" rays that damage the skin's surface causing sunburn, and may lead to premature skin aging. UVA rays penetrate the skin more deeply causing long-term deep tissue damage such as collagen breakdown, wrinkles, age spots, and loss of firmness.

Most sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher protect against UVB rays, but you need a sunscreen that offers broad spectrum coverage against both UVB and UVA rays.

Recently, the FDA approved the use of Mexoryl SX, which is a new active sunscreen ingredient that offers greater UVA and UVB protection. Other active ingredients to look for when you are shopping for sunscreen are avobenzone, octocrylene, Parsol 1789, micronized titanium dioxide, and zinc oxide.

What SPF is best for you?

Determine how many minutes your bare skin can be exposed before it burns. Divide that number of minutes into the total number of minutes you want to spend in the sun. The result is the SPF number you should look for in a sunscreen. If you planned on being in the sun for three hours, and you know that your skin burns in 10 minutes when it is unprotected you would need a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 18.

Worried about vitamin D deficiency?

Most people can meet their vitamin D needs through 15-20 minutes of sun exposure to unprotected skin two to three times per week, but is this worth the risk of skin cancer? You can also get vitamin D from foods like salmon, tuna, and fortified milk.

It is best to remain prudent in limiting exposure to harmful rays, wear plenty of sunscreen, and eat a healthy diet containing fish, eggs, and fortified milk.

Learn more about sun exposure from the Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvandhealth.html

Take

a Hike

Who wants to be sweating inside of a gym when the weather is nice outside? Summer is a great time to take your workout outside and enjoy the fresh air.

Hiking is an increasingly popular fitness option, and here are a few tips to keep you safe and free from injury.

The basics of hiking are similar to walking, but it's taken *off-road*. The best way to get started is to find a safe and clear path. Many state parks have trails marked with distances and difficulty ratings matched to differing levels of experience.

Finding shoes with good traction is critical to prevent injuries especially if you plan on climbing rocks, or hiking up hills. Many manufacturers design shoes specifically for trail walking or hiking. Such shoes repel water and help keep the feet dry when stomping through ponds or streams. You can also hike with your standard running or walking shoes if the trail route is minimally intense. The most important factor in choosing appropriate footwear is the fit, so that blisters will not ruin your hike. Never break in new shoes on a difficult hike.

Always carry water on a hike regardless of length or difficulty. It is easy to become dehydrated while hiking even when it is cool outside. Remember to drink at least four ounces of water every 20 minutes. Also, carry nutrient dense snacks if you plan to hike all day. People with diabetes should bring a quick acting source of sugar. And remember to bring insect repellent and sunscreen whenever you are outdoors.

Hiking is a great activity to add to any workout plan. It can provide the same benefits as cross training by challenging your muscles in different ways. It's also a great way to improve mental and emotional health because you can really get away from the stress of everyday life.

For more information about hiking at parks, visit the National Park Service at www.nps.gov.

Picnic:

Food Safety

Enjoy your summer picnic but stay away from foods prepared with mayonnaise right? *Wrong!*

The idea that mayonnaise is the culprit in food-borne illnesses dates back to when people made it from scratch using raw eggs, which can harbor bacteria.

Today's commercially prepared salad dressings use pasteurized eggs and have a level of acidity that actually kills some types of bacteria. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the real villains most likely to make you sick are unwashed fruits and vegetables, raw shellfish, and raw meats.

Picnic Tips:

- Wash all fruits and vegetables.
- Wash hands, cutting tools, and all surfaces that the food will touch
- Don't let raw meats touch the same surfaces as other foods.

Cook foods to a safe temperature (keep a food thermometer handy):

- Chicken dark meat: 180 degrees F/white meat: 170 degrees F.
- Hamburgers: 160 degrees/Steaks: 145 degrees F.
- Pork: 160 degrees F.

No Added Sugar

Interested in losing a few pounds, and looking for low sugar or sugar-free products?

Maybe your doctor told you that you are at risk for developing diabetes, and you need to eat less sugary foods?

At the grocery store, making a selection can be daunting. What do the labels "no added sugar," or "sugar-free" mean?

"It's critical to read food labels when selecting modified sugar products," says FOH dietitian LT Susan Steinman.

Not Low Cal

Counting calories? Low or no sugar does not mean low calorie. Removing or reducing sugar means that the associated calories will disappear as well.

However, altering the sugar content may only make a negligible difference in total calories. "In some cases, there will even be added calories from fat or protein sources." says LT Steinman.

What's in a Name?

For a manufacturer to make the nutrient claim of "no sugar added," they cannot add sugar or ingredients that substitute for sugar (e.g., fruit juices, honey) during packaging or processing.

Not Zero Sugar

Sugar-free does not always mean zero sugar. Foods labeled "sugar free" must have less than 0.5 grams of sugar *per serving*. LT Steinman recommends performing a serving size "reality check." Is it likely you'll only eat one serving? If not, how much sugar are you likely to consume?

The Buzz on Sugar Alcohols?

Sugar alcohols are a common sugar substitute found in many sugar/no sugar added candies, ice cream, and gum, and provide about half the calories of sugar. Most have names that end in "ol," like sorbitol, maltitol, and xylitol. Because sugar alcohols are incompletely absorbed by the body, they may produce abdominal discomfort and even have a laxative effect in some individuals. Consider limiting intake to less than 20 grams per day.

Keeping tabs on your sugar intake is important, but so is a balanced diet that includes fresh vegetables and fruit, lean proteins, and high quality grains. "And don't forget to be active most days of the week!" says LT Steinman.

FOH provides a variety of health and wellness promotion services including weight management programs and nutritional information. For more information about these resources, contact your Wellness/Fitness center.

"He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything."

-Proverb; author unknown

Is Healthy Optimism

Key to Health?

There are two ways of looking at life: *Optimism* – an inclination to anticipate the best possible outcomes; and *pessimism* – which is the tendency to expect the worst possible outcomes.

Not long ago, psychologist Martin Seligman, became interested in not only what makes people feel bad or get depressed, but what contributes to success, health, and happiness. For years, he studied people who had experienced many kinds of successes in life, including those who had succeeded despite numerous setbacks and challenges. Not to diminish over 30 years of research, but what Seligman found was health, happiness, and success comes down to *choice*: the choice to hold an optimistic or pessimistic attitude about yourself, others, work, and life itself.

Though many things in life are beyond our control, how we think about and anticipate events – whether we can change them or not – guides our actions and reactions. Seligman found that optimism and pessimism actually affect health. Optimists get sick less frequently than pessimists. Why? Because the *actions* of optimists are often different. They may engage in more preventive health behaviors.

On the other hand, sometimes a pessimistic attitude can lead to paralysis: You take no action because you don't feel you can change anything. This is the "why bother" approach.

How optimistic are you? Most people fall usually somewhere in the middle between optimism and pessimism. But, since according to Seligman, optimism can be learned, improving optimism can go a long way toward improving how we experience each moment of our lives.

Of course, not all pessimism is bad if it provides a healthy dose of realism. There are times when a realistic outlook will prevent you from taking dangerous or unnecessary risks. So, a healthy balance between optimism and realism is important as long as realism doesn't become pessimism.

Source: *Learned Optimism: How to change your mind and your life*, by Martin E.P. Seligman.

FOH, the Occupational Health Provider of Choice for the Federal Government

The mission of FOH is to improve the health, safety, and productivity of the federal workforce. Created by Congress in 1946, FOH is a non-appropriated service agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Program Support Center.

Federal agencies throughout the U.S. and overseas can access FOH services. FOH provides worksite health services, Wellness/Fitness, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), Work/Life, Environmental Health and Safety, Organizational and Professional Development, and Training and Education.

Contact FOH at **(800) 457-9808** or visit us at www.foh.dhhs.gov.
