



# Healthy Habits

Tips and resources for living well



## Staying Safe in the Summer Heat

As the days get warmer, it becomes increasingly important to stay hydrated and keep your body cool. Whether you are spending a leisurely day at the beach or going for an outdoor run, you should make sure that you are taking the proper steps to prevent dehydration and overheating.

### Tips to stay hydrated:

**Keep water on hand:** Take a water bottle with you before leaving the house and drink from it throughout the day. Feeling thirsty is a signal that your body is already on the way to dehydration, so drink up!

**Snack on hydrating fruits and veggies:** Peaches, oranges, cucumber, carrots, watermelon, and grapes all taste great and help to re-hydrate!

**Drink water before, during, and after exercising:** If you are doing low to moderate activity for less than an hour, water is sufficient. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends that for every 15-20 minutes you exercise, drink 3 to 8 fluid ounces of water (if you're not exceeding 60 minutes of exercise).

However, if you are exercising for over an hour, particularly in extreme heat, you should consider supplementing water with your choice of electrolyte replacement. The ACSM recommends that when exercising for an hour or more, for every 15-20 minutes you exercise, drink 3 to 8 fluid ounces of a sports beverage (containing 5 to 8 percent carbohydrates, along with electrolytes). Also, avoid drinking more than more than a quart during an hour of exercise.

### Tips to stay cool:

**Dress appropriately:** Lightweight, light-colored clothes help reflect sunlight away from your body and help keep heat levels down. Wear clothes that are made of cotton or a sweat-wicking material. Protect your face with a wide-brimmed hat, and wear sunscreen.

**Choose the time you spend outdoors wisely:** The temperature tends to be cooler in the early morning and early evening. If you are going to spend time outside during peak heat, opt for shady areas and try to avoid direct sunlight.

**Listen to your body:** If you start to feel lightheaded or faint, take a break from whatever you are doing, have some water, and find a cool area to rest in.

**Know the signs of a heat-related illness:** Visit the CDC's Extreme Heat and Your Health website to learn about the warning signs of heat-related illness. If you suspect that you or someone you are with is experiencing heat stroke, call 911 immediately.

With just a little planning and preparation, you and your loved ones can stay cool and refreshed on hot summer days. Enjoy the warm weather and stay safe!



## Remember the ABCs of skin cancer

According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types. More than 3.5 million people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year in the United States—that's more than all other cancers combined. Most skin cancers can be detected through skin examinations. Both regular skin exams by your doctor and checking your own skin more frequently can help you find new skin or mole changes.

**When examining your own skin, look for these warning signs:**

**A (asymmetry):** Do you have a mole that is asymmetrical?

**B (border):** Do you have a mole with an uneven border?

**C (color):** Do you have a mole that is more than one color?

**D (dimension):** Do you have a mole that is larger than the size of a pencil eraser?

**E (evolving):** Do you have a mole that has changed over time?

If you notice any suspicious spots or feel uncomfortable about the way a mole is changing, it is important to talk to your doctor.

**Too much exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays is the number one cause of skin cancer. Take these steps to defend your skin against damage.**

- **Apply sunscreen** with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or greater at least 30 minutes before sun exposure. Reapply at least every 2 hours after the first application, or more often if you are sweating or swimming.
- **Wear sunglasses** with total UV protection.
- **Stay in the shade** as much as possible.
- **Wear wide-brimmed hats** that cover and protect areas like your head, neck, face and ears.
- **Wear clothing made of tightly woven fabrics** that are light, vivid colors.
- If you already have sunburn, **wear long-sleeved shirts and pants** to prevent further skin damage.
- **Avoid direct exposure as much as possible during peak UV radiation hours**, between 10 am and 2 pm.
- **Avoid tanning beds.**

**Choosing the right sunscreen is important! Keep these tips in mind while shopping for sunscreen.**

- Look for both UVA and UVB broad spectrum protection. UVA and UVB are invisible wavelengths of light that reach the earth and cause damage to skin.
- Opt for water-resistant sunscreen.
- Always check the expiration date. Even if you're buying new, you should check just to be safe. If you have old sunscreen at home, make sure it didn't expire before you use it. Sunscreen can lose its effectiveness over time. When in doubt, throw it out.
- The longer you'll be outside, the higher the SPF you'll need:
  - SPF 15 filters out 93% of incoming UVB rays
  - SPF 30 filters out 97% of incoming UVB rays.
  - SPF 50 filters out 98% of the incoming UVB rays.



## Opioid misuse: What you need to know

Have you or a loved one been prescribed opioid painkillers and worry about misusing them? It's a common concern. An estimated 2.1 million people in the US are suffering from substance abuse related to these powerful pain relievers. Knowing the facts and seeking help early could be a lifesaver! Health Advocate can help. Here's what you should know.

**What are opioids?**

Opioids are powerful prescription pain relievers like hydrocodone (e.g., Vicodin) or oxycodone (e.g., OxyContin or Percocet). They're often prescribed after an injury or surgery.

**What's the concern?**

- Opioids are addictive and easy to overmedicate and misuse. Anyone can become addicted.
- Taken over time, opioids can produce serious mental and physical effects that can interfere with the ability to function normally. They can also create a constant need to take the drug, which can result in overdose or even death.
- Once addicted to opioids, many people have switched to Fentanyl—a synthetically-made opioid that's more potent than heroin, and often obtained as an illegal narcotic.
- Fentanyl is responsible for a growing number of overdose deaths.

**How can you protect against opioid misuse?**

Spotting the beginning signs of abuse early can lead to successful interventions. Look for these warning signs:

- **Drowsiness.** Nodding off during a conversation, meeting, class or dinner.
- **Inability to focus.** Poor concentration can result in impaired performance and missed days at work or school.
- **Loss of relationships.** People misusing painkillers may be increasingly isolated or choose to be with others who have similar addictions.
- **Physical changes.** Signs include: small pupils, itching or flushed skin, an unkempt appearance, confusion, slurred speech, or frequent flu-like symptoms — nausea, fever and headache can be signs of withdrawal when someone can't get more of the drug.