

TIPS AND TRICKS

Make This Your Healthiest Summer Yet

Men's Health Month: Taking Action

Quick Health Checks for Busy Men:

- Schedule your annual physical now - many men skip this crucial appointment
- Know your numbers: blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels
- Set a reminder for monthly self-exams (testicular and skin)
- Consider preventive screenings based on your age (colorectal cancer, prostate health)

Mental Wellness Matters:

- Break the stigma - it's strength, not weakness, to seek help for mental health
- Try the "3-3-3 Rule" when feeling stressed: name 3 things you see, 3 sounds you hear, and move 3 parts of your body
- Schedule regular "mental health check-ins" with yourself or a trusted friend
- Consider apps like Headspace or Calm for guided meditation specifically designed for beginners

Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month: Boost Your Brain Health

Daily Brain Boosters:

- Challenge your brain with puzzles, new skills, or learning a language
- Maintain social connections - they're crucial for cognitive health
- Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep nightly
- Incorporate "brain foods" like fatty fish, berries, nuts, and leafy greens

Supporting Those Affected:

- Learn the early warning signs of cognitive decline
- Practice patience and understanding with those experiencing memory issues
- Offer specific help rather than asking "What can I do?" (e.g., "I'd like to bring dinner on Thursday")
- Connect caregivers with resources like the Alzheimer's Association helpline (800-272-3900)

Brain-Healthy Habits:

- Take a 10-minute "brain break" daily - step away from screens and practice mindfulness
- Stay physically active - what's good for your heart is good for your brain
- Maintain blood pressure in healthy ranges
- Consider the MIND diet, which combines Mediterranean and DASH eating patterns

Migraine & Headache Awareness: Finding Relief

Tracking & Prevention:

- Start a headache journal to identify personal triggers
- Stay hydrated - aim for half your body weight in ounces of water daily
- Maintain consistent sleep and meal schedules, even on weekends
- Practice stress-reduction techniques like progressive muscle relaxation

Quick Relief Strategies:

- Create a "migraine kit" with medication, eye mask, earplugs, and comfort items
- Try the 20-20-20 rule for eye strain: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds
- Apply cold or warm compresses (experiment to see which works better for you)
- Practice gentle neck stretches and shoulder rolls throughout the day

Workplace Accommodations:

- Request anti-glare screens or adjust lighting if needed
- Consider noise-canceling headphones for sensitive environments
- Advocate for fragrance-free policies if scents are triggers
- Keep emergency medication accessible at work

Heat Safety & Hydration

Hydration Beyond Water:

- Balance electrolytes by incorporating coconut water, sports drinks (for intense activity), or adding a pinch of sea salt and lemon to water
- Create a personal hydration formula: divide your weight (in pounds) by 2 = minimum ounces needed daily, adding 12oz for every 30 minutes of exercise
- Boost intake with hydrating foods like cucumber (96% water), watermelon (92% water), and strawberries (91% water)

Heat Illness Prevention:

- Know the difference: Heat exhaustion (heavy sweating, weakness, cold/clammy skin) vs. Heat stroke (hot/dry skin, rapid pulse, confusion, 103°F+ fever) - the latter requires immediate emergency care
- Practice the "shade rule" - if your shadow is shorter than you, seek shade immediately
- Pre-cool before outdoor activities by applying cold towels to pulse points (wrists, neck, temples)
- Acclimate gradually to hot weather - increase outdoor exposure by 20% each day

Special Populations:

- Elderly: May have diminished thirst sensation - schedule regular drink breaks regardless of thirst
- Children: Offer water before, during, and after play (approximately 4oz every 20 minutes during activity)
- Chronic conditions: Those with heart disease,

diabetes, or on certain medications may need customized hydration plans - consult healthcare providers

Sun Protection Essentials

Beyond Sunscreen:

- Invest in UPF-rated clothing (look for UPF 30+ ratings) - especially important for extended outdoor activities
- Wear wide-brimmed hats (minimum 3-inch brim) that protect ears and neck
- Schedule outdoor activities before 10am or after 4pm when UV rays are less intense
- Remember the shadow rule: "Short shadow, seek shade"

Sunscreen Savvy:

- Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before sun exposure and reapply every 2 hours (more frequently if swimming or sweating)
- Use the "teaspoon rule": 1 teaspoon for face/neck, 1 for each arm, 2 each for chest/back and each leg
- Choose broad-spectrum protection (UVA/UVB) with minimum SPF 30, and water-resistant formulas for active days
- Don't forget commonly missed spots: ears, back of neck, tops of feet, and scalp part lines

Eye & Lip Protection:

- Select sunglasses with 99-100% UV protection (look for "UV400" or "100% UV protection" labels)
- Consider wraparound styles for side protection, especially near water or snow
- Use lip balm with SPF 15+ and reapply frequently (lips have thin skin with minimal melanin)
- For children, secure sunglasses with straps and choose impact-resistant lenses

Skin Health Monitoring:

- Perform monthly skin checks using the ABCDE method: Asymmetry, Border irregularity, Color variation, Diameter >6mm, Evolving size/shape
- Take "skin selfies" of moles or concerning areas to track changes over time
- Schedule annual skin checks with a dermatologist, especially if you have fair skin or family history of skin cancer
- After sun exposure, apply cooling aloe vera gel (store in refrigerator for extra relief) or try cool black tea compresses to reduce inflammation

Summer Nutrition

Seasonal Produce Power:

- Watermelon: Rich in lycopene and vitamin C; helps reduce inflammation and improve heart health
- Berries: Packed with antioxidants and fiber; support brain health and digestion
- Tomatoes: Contain more lycopene when cooked; protect skin from sun damage from within
- Stone fruits (peaches, plums): Provide vitamin C, potassium, and fiber; support immune function
- Create a "rainbow challenge" - eat at least one fruit or vegetable from each color group daily

Heat-Free Meal Ideas:

- Mason jar salads: Layer dressing on bottom, hearty vegetables in middle, greens on top for grab-and-go nutrition
- Protein-packed Mediterranean platters: Hummus, olives, feta, whole grain crackers, and fresh vegetables
- Overnight oats with summer fruits and nuts - prepare in evening for ready-to-eat breakfast
- Chilled soups like gazpacho or cucumber-avocado that require only blending, not cooking

Outdoor Food Safety:

- Follow the "2-hour rule" (1 hour if over 90°F): Don't leave perishable food unrefrigerated longer
- Use separate coolers for drinks and food (the drink cooler is opened more frequently)
- Pack foods in reverse order: items needed last go in first (at the bottom)
- Bring two sets of utensils/cutting boards - one for raw and one for cooked foods
- Consider natural insect repellents near food areas: citronella, basil, or lavender plants

Hydrating Food Choices:

- Create "hydration salads" with cucumber, celery, radishes, bell peppers, and leafy greens (all 90%+ water)
- Incorporate chia seeds soaked in coconut water for sustained hydration (they absorb up to 10x their weight in liquid)
- Choose fruits with high water content for snacks: watermelon, strawberries, cantaloupe, peaches, oranges
- Prepare broth-based cold soups that provide both hydration and nutrients

Healthier Summer Treats:

- Freeze Greek yogurt with berries in popsicle molds for protein-rich desserts
- Blend frozen bananas for "nice cream" - add cocoa powder, nut butter, or berries for variations
- Make refreshing agua frescas with minimal added sugar (try watermelon-mint or cucumber-lime)
- Create fruit "popsicles" by freezing fruit chunks on skewers for a fun, mess-free treat

Dive Deeper

- [Tips for a Happy and Healthy Summer](#)
- [Why Men's Health Deserves Special Attention](#)
- [Summer Hydration and Wellness Tips](#)