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May 2012

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Safe and Fun in the Sun

May is Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention month, the perfect time to brush up on ways to protect your loved ones, since warmer weather means more time spent soaking up the sun.

Each year, 3.5 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed, making it the most common form of cancer in the United States. The good news is that skin cancer is easily cured if detected early, so doctors recommend that you perform a monthly self-examination. Here's what to look for:

- A skin growth that increases in size and looks pearly, translucent, tan, brown, black or multicolored.
- Any brown spot (including moles, birthmarks, etc.) that:
 - changes color or texture
 - increases in size or thickness
 - is irregular in outline
 - is larger than ¼ inch
 - appears after age 21.
- A spot or sore that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab, erode or bleed.
- An open sore that does not heal within three weeks.



Here are a few ways you can protect your skin when spending time outside:

- Generously apply a water-resistant sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher whenever outside, even on cloudy days. Reapply every two hours and after swimming or sweating.
- Wear breathable, protective clothing, such as a long-sleeve shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses when possible.
- Seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. as the sun's rays are strongest during this time.
- Use extra caution—and extra sun screen—near water, snow and sand which can reflect and intensify the sunlight.
- Avoid tanning beds as the ultraviolet light from them can cause skin cancer and wrinkling.

Outdoor Exercise

Ready to move your exercise routine outdoors? As the temperature climbs, so does your risk of suffering from a heat-related illness. Review the list below to stay safe as the mercury rises:

- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water the day before, the day of, and after your workout.
- Avoid exercising between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., the hottest period of the day.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses to reduce exposure to the sun.
- Be aware of the symptoms of a heat-related illness and take immediate precautions if you begin to feel faint, dizzy, nauseated, are sweating heavily, or experiencing a weak or rapid heartbeat.

DID YOU KNOW

Without taking the necessary precautions, exercising in high temperatures can lead to:

- Heat cramps
- Heat exhaustion
- Heatstroke



Food Safety Tips for Grilling

It's grilling season! When planning your next outdoor menu (see kebabs recipe below!), one item you'll definitely want to leave off the plate is foodborne illness—here's how:

- **Wash everything** – Before and after cooking, wash all indoor and outdoor surfaces that will come into contact with food. Be especially careful to wash everything that comes into contact with raw meat or poultry and wash your hands often to prevent contamination.
- **Marinate safely** – If you plan on marinating raw meat, do so in a covered container in a refrigerator, not on the counter. This decreases the risk of bacteria.
- **Keep everything covered** – Cover all food with tin foil while outside. This keeps insects or bacteria from landing on and contaminating your food.

- **Keep hot foods hot** – Grilled food that is finished cooking can be kept hot until serving by moving it to the side of the grill rack. This keeps the food from overcooking and prevents bacteria from forming.



Budget-friendly Vacations

Dreaming of a summer get-away that doesn't bust your budget? As you plan your trip, consider these money-saving travel tips.

- Comparison shop airport options. Big cities often have multiple airports, or smaller ones nearby. The cheapest option might be worth the drive.
- Pack a single carry-on bag. Many airlines are charging up to \$100 for each checked piece of luggage. Plus, if your luggage is lost or delayed, you may have to purchase new items for your vacation.
- Consider vacationing with friends or family. Sharing a rented townhome is often less expensive than staying in a hotel. Check out www.airbnb.com, a vacation rentals service that matches travelers seeking cheaper short-term accommodations with private rental options.
- To save on food, many websites offer deals at certain restaurants, so be sure to research any specials before you hit the road. Or, rent accommodation with a kitchen so you can cook "at home."
- Convert to foreign currency before you leave. Many airport currency exchanges and foreign ATMs often charge hefty fees, so it is best to change your money at a bank before you leave.
- Staycation instead. The best way to save money might be to take a few days off to explore your city or one nearby. You might be surprised to discover that you don't have to travel far or spend a lot of money to feel like you got away from it all.

Cilantro-lime Shrimp Kebabs

Celebrate the weather by dusting off your grill and cooking up these simple, delicious cilantro-lime shrimp kebabs.

16 large shrimp, uncooked, deveined
the juice of 3 large limes, or about ¼ cup of juice
2 cloves of garlic, crushed and peeled
¼ tsp black pepper
2 tsp olive oil
2 tbsp fresh cilantro, cleaned and chopped
10 medium cherry tomatoes, rinsed and dried
10 white button mushrooms, wiped clean and stems removed

In a glass measuring cup, add the lime juice, garlic, pepper, olive oil, and cilantro and stir. Place the shrimp in a medium bowl and pour the cilantro lime marinade over the shrimp. Let marinate for only 10 to 15 minutes in the refrigerator. Alternate cherry tomatoes, mushrooms and shrimp on four skewers. Grill the skewers over a medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes on each side until the shrimp are just cooked through.

Yield: 2 servings. Each serving provides 160 calories, 6g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 17g carbohydrates, 95mg sodium and 4g fiber.

Source: www.cdc.gov



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High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a condition in which one's resting blood pressure is consistently measured at 140/90 or greater. Nearly one in three adults in the United States has high blood pressure.

Each time the heart beats, it pumps out blood into the arteries. Blood pressure is highest when the heart beats (called *systolic pressure*) and lowest when at rest (*diastolic pressure*). This is why blood pressure is always given as two numbers, such as 120/80, which is considered the normal range. Once the level reaches 140/90 or above, it is considered high blood pressure. With this condition, the heart and arteries work harder, and the chances of a stroke, heart attack or kidney problems are greater.

Causes and Risk Factors

No single specific cause has been identified in people with high blood pressure, but research is ongoing. In some people, it is the result of another medical problem or medication. When the cause is known, this is called *secondary high blood pressure*. Research has shown that the following factors put one more at risk for high blood pressure:

- Obesity
- Being African-American
- If male, being over age 45; if female, being over age 55
- A family history

- Having prehypertension (blood pressure in the 120-139/80-89 range)
- Excessive salt and/or alcohol consumption
- Not enough potassium in the diet
- Being physically inactive
- Having ongoing stress
- Smoking
- If female, taking certain oral contraceptives

Symptoms

Those with high blood pressure may have it for years without knowing, due to its lack of symptoms. The only way to find out is to have routine blood pressure checks during every visit to the doctor.

The Importance of Treatment

The first and best course of action when high blood pressure is discovered is to change eating and exercise habits. However, sometimes even when a person makes healthy changes, blood pressure remains high. In that case, a physician will most likely prescribe a blood pressure medication. If left untreated, high blood pressure can cause:

- Enlarging of the heart, which leads to heart failure

- Aneurysms in the arteries of the heart, brain, legs, intestines or spleen
- Narrowing of the blood vessels in the kidney, leading to kidney failure
- Hardening of the arteries, which can cause a heart attack, stroke or kidney failure
- Blood vessels bursting in the eyes

Prevention

High blood pressure can easily be prevented. Some of the best ways to avoid the condition include:

- Limiting salt, fats and alcohol
- Eating healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Being physically active
- Quitting smoking



Did you know...?

Those with high blood pressure often exhibit few or no symptoms, which is why the condition is frequently referred to as the "silent killer."

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Skin Cancer: Are You Safe in the Sun?

Many people describe sun-tanned skin as a “healthy glow,” but nothing could be further from the truth. There is no such thing as a safe, healthy tan.

Sun Damage

Any type of suntan is the result of sun damage caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Other types of sun damage include wrinkles, age spots, freckles, tough or leathery skin, dilated blood vessels, sunburn and skin cancer.

The sun emits two types of UV radiation: UVA (which causes aging) and UVB (which causes burning). Both UVA and UVB rays are undetectable to a person sitting in the sun – you cannot feel them on your skin – and are damaging on cool, cloudy days as well as sunny days. In addition, both types of radiation cause skin cancer.

Skin Cancer

People are most susceptible to skin cancer when they are exposed to sudden, short bursts of sunlight while in places where the sun is very strong, such as locations near the equator or at very high altitudes.

The following characteristics place people at an even higher risk of developing skin cancer:

- Having a large number of moles on the skin
- Being a redhead or blonde, and/or having blue eyes, fair skin and freckles
- Difficulty tanning and skin that is easily burned
- A family history of skin cancer
- Taking medication that increases sun sensitivity

Preventing Sun Damage

The easiest way to prevent skin damage and lessen your chances of getting skin cancer is to avoid getting sunburn. Here are a few tips to help keep you safe in the sun:

- Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when it is strongest.
- Wear clothes with tightly woven fabric and a hat that shades your face, neck and ears.
- Wear sunglasses whenever you are outside to avoid developing cataracts and damaging your retinas.
- Use sunscreen that has at least 15 SPF every day,

especially on your lips and the tips of your ears and nose.

- Avoid using tanning beds; they are just as damaging as the sun.
- Protect children from sun damage. Most sun exposure occurs before age 18.

Avoiding excessive sun exposure and sunburn is the best way to protect yourself from sun damage and skin cancer. Routinely inspect your skin for any changes, and if you suspect that a spot on your skin is new, or has changed color or appearance, consult a dermatologist.



Did You Know...?

Skin cancer attacks more than one million Americans every year, and exposure to the sun causes over 90 percent of skin cancers in the United States.