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Eat your vitamins FOR GOOD HEALTH

Vitamins play a powerful role in supporting the immune system. These three vitamins are some of the best for immune system support:

- **Vitamin D:** Eat foods like fortified milk, cereal and fatty fish, like salmon. Spend 15 minutes a day in the sun to get a good dose of vitamin D. Or take a daily 1,000-4,000 IU supplement.
- **Vitamin C:** Eat citrus fruits, tomatoes, potatoes, strawberries, peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and kiwifruit.
- **Zinc:** Eat red meat, poultry, fortified cereal, whole grains, beans and nuts.

Dietary supplements can also be a good option, but be sure you talk to your doctor first. Dietary supplements can cause undesirable side effects, especially if taken with other medications or if taken in large doses.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

UV safety

Sitting in the warm sun can be great for your mental health and your daily dose of vitamin D. But too much sun exposure can pose a big problem. Before you get some rays, plan ahead so your fun in the sun doesn't end with a painful sunburn.

- **Find shade:** You don't want to be in direct sunlight for too long. Find a shady area or an umbrella to sit under for some respite from the sun.
- **Wear clothing:** The right clothes can help reduce sun damage. Choose lightweight, breathable fabrics that cover your arms, legs, chest and back. Find a wide-brimmed hat to cover your face and neck and buy sunglasses with 100% UV protection. Choose clothes with built-in UV protection, as well.
- **Rub in sunscreen:** Wearing sunscreen is a habit you should practice year-round. Make sure you choose a sunscreen with at least SPF 15 - SPF 30 is a better choice. Reapply every two hours or immediately after swimming.



HOW TO SOOTHE A SUNBURN

It's fun to play in the sun. But what do you do when the sun bites back? First things first, get out of the sun! Cover up your skin if you're outside and find a cool, dark place. Then, get to work helping your skin recover.

1. **Take a cool bath or shower to cool down your skin.** Avoid using harsh soaps or body washes, as these could make your skin dry out even more.
2. **Apply a moisturizer or aloe vera to the burn.** This helps to trap moisture in your skin, which can help with healing. Aloe vera is anti-inflammatory, promotes circulation and may help stop bacteria from growing.
3. **Drink water.** Your body fights a sunburn by drawing water to the surface of your skin. This could lead to dehydration, so be sure to replenish your fluids often.
4. **Take extra care.** After a sunburn, it is very important that you stay out of the sun for the next few days so your skin can heal. Wear loose clothing and avoid any itchy fabrics.
5. **See a doctor if...** you get severe blistering, develop a fever and chills, or see signs of infection, such as oozing pus or red streaks.



Source: American Academy of Dermatology Association

Be kind to yourself

We live in a hectic and complicated world, that can be difficult to navigate. Nobody is perfect, yet you may feel like you must strive to measure up to impossible standards. Or, you may struggle to accept mistakes and failures in your life. But you can overcome this by practicing self-compassion.

Self-compassion means learning to be kind and understanding to yourself. It may take time, but with practice, you can learn to accept yourself for exactly who you are, even your imperfections.



BREATH AWARENESS PRACTICE

Sit comfortably with your feet planted firmly on the floor. Lengthen your spine, allowing it to stretch out like a string of pearls. For the next two minutes, turn all of your awareness to your breathing. Do not change how you breathe. Just pay attention to how it feels to breathe in and breathe out and to the pauses between your breaths. If your attention moves away from your breathing, be gentle with yourself and just return your attention to your breath.



THE PATH OF SELF-COMPASSION

Step 1: Focus on Self-kindness. If you tend to criticize yourself or be overcome with feelings of shame, learn how to become aware of these thoughts without pushing them away. Consider how these thoughts make you feel. Write down these feelings.

Step 2: Acknowledge Common Humanity. Although we may feel isolated and alone in our failures, the reality is that many human beings share similar experiences. Take comfort in knowing you are not alone and there are others who understand you and your circumstances. Allow others to show you compassion.

Step 3: Practice Mindful Awareness. Once you become comfortable with your negative thoughts, learn how to sit and observe them. To do this, you must be fully present in the moment, and allow any thoughts to pass through your mind without judging them. This can help those who often dwell on past events or worry about future events. Being present helps you focus on what is happening now.



HEALTH BENEFITS

Regularly practicing self-compassion can help you feel:

- Less depressed, stressed or anxious
- More satisfied with a greater sense of purpose
- Less worried and fearful



Prevent firework injuries

Fireworks are all fun and games until someone gets hurt. In fact, fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires each year and cause thousands of injuries. However, those facts still don't deter many people from buying and setting off fireworks each summer. To keep yourself and your family safe, practice these fireworks safety tips.

LEAVE IT TO THE PROFESSIONALS

If you can, allow professionals to set off any fireworks. Attend a public fireworks event over trying to set up your own fireworks display.

KEEP CHILDREN AWAY

If you are setting off your own fireworks, do not allow children to help and make sure everyone is at a safe distance.



SPARKLERS ARE SCARY

This popular pastime for children has proven to be one of the most dangerous. Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals. They can ignite clothing and severely burn children who drop them on their feet. Safer alternatives to consider are glow sticks, confetti poppers and colored streamers.

SAY NO TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Do not set off any fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol. Or, ask someone else who is not impaired to set off the fireworks for you.

HANDLE WITH CARE

Do not hold the fireworks in your hands or set off indoors. Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material. Do not point or throw fireworks at another person and never ignite devices in a container.

STAY AWAY FROM DEFECTIVE FIREWORKS

Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak both used and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding. Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or use in case of fire.

Source: National Safety Council