

JULY 2008

This issue ▶ Beat Jet Lag ▶ Blood Pressure Advice ▶ Sunscreen 101 ▶ Bug Control ▶ No-Cook Meals

Renew Family Fitness Goals Take the Olympic Challenge

The 2008 Summer Olympic Games kick off next month with thousands of high-energy athletes ready to compete and inspire us to set our own physical goals. Why not harness the fitness zeal of the games to challenge yourselves – and your children – to get moving?

Make a point of viewing the games as a family. Talk about the kinds of events your children most enjoy watching, and which ones they might like to try. Maybe it's something unique – handball, badminton, equestrian, archery, aquatics or diving. Research kids' athletic programs offered through local fitness or recreation centers.

To encourage your kids and build their confidence, focus on the positive side of organized sports, such as improved health, teamwork and self-esteem, rather than competition or winning.

Emphasize the fun factor of exercise – and show them! Go biking, hiking, dancing or skating together. Include them in pleasant physical tasks such as gardening, walking to the store, bathing the dog or washing the neighbours' cars.



Summer is the best season to start a family fitness plan. Let the games begin!

Design family-oriented physical contests: Challenge each other in rope jumping, basketball, ping-pong or paddleboat tournaments.

3 quick steps you can take this week:

- 1 Have a meeting to choose regular times and days for exercise.
- 2 List new and favourite activities you want to try as a group.
- 3 Turn off the tube, turn on the action!

What makes a winner is taking time every day to nurture the fitness spirit.

MORE INFO ▶ Health Canada: www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/pa-ap/cg-cg_e.html

HEALTH notes

■ **The WHOLE story:** When choosing whole-grain products, the key word is whole – and it should be the first ingredient listed on the label. Examples: *whole wheat, whole rye, whole oats*. Foods that say *wheat flour* or *enriched wheat* are simply refined (white) flour and won't contain the bran and germ that supply the whole package of nutrients and fibre.

■ **Don't doze and drive.** If you're tired when driving, don't push it! It's hard to judge when you're about to fall asleep at the wheel. Watch for warnings:

- You have trouble keeping your eyes open and focused.
- Your head nods.
- You suddenly realize you can't recall the last few kilometres.
- You notice an obstacle but barely manage to avoid it because your reaction time has slowed.

Your first response to any of these signals is to stop driving immediately. Those at high risk: third shift workers, people driving many kilometres each day, those with sleep disorders, and those using medication with sedatives.

■ **Skim MILK Eases Pressure?** Drinking that tall glass of milk can do more than strengthen your bones – it may also improve blood pressure, reports the American Heart Association. A study of 30,000 middle-aged women found that those who drank 2 or more servings of skim milk each day reduced their risk of high blood pressure by as much as 10% compared to those who drank milk less than once a month. The same was not found for higher fat milk and milk products or calcium and vitamin D supplement users.

Worried about MEMORY loss?

Here are some everyday conditions guaranteed to cause forgetfulness:

Overload – If you are overwhelmed with details and tasks, you will probably forget stuff. After all, the more you have to learn and do, the more you have to forget.

Stress or depression – Memory fails us when we are distressed and distracted with worries. Even the need to remember causes stress.

Medications – Sleeping pills, sedatives and some blood pressure medicines can interfere with memory because they reduce alertness and concentration. Ask your provider.



Q & A

Q: Best ways to beat jet lag?

A: Jet lag is a sleep disorder that occurs when your body's clock is out of sync with local time. It often affects travelers who cross several time zones quickly. To feel better:

Get extra H₂O. Dehydration increases fatigue and jet lag, so drink water before, during and after your trip. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which can be dehydrating and disrupt sleep.

Walk between and after long flights. It can reduce muscle tension and fatigue. **Bonus:** Exercising in daylight may relieve jet lag, and you'll burn calories, and see some sights.

Snooze well. Upon arrival, try not to sleep until local nighttime. Earplugs and an eye mask may aid slumber.

Melatonin supplements? Some limited research suggests a dose of .5 to 5mg of melatonin may help you sleep outside your normal routine. Consult your health care provider about effective use and possible side effects of melatonin.

Walking to Work Drops Diabetes Risk

A study of 8,600 men (age 40-55) working for the same company in sedentary jobs found those who spent at least 21 minutes walking to work had a 25% lower risk of diabetes than those who walked for 10 minutes or less. A 4-year follow-up found those men who earned the protection walked to work every day at a normal pace, as reported in *Diabetes Care* (September 2007). If you can't walk to work, find some way to walk – or get other exercise – every day. Exercise can lower diabetes risk by making your body more sensitive to insulin even if you don't do vigorous activity or lose weight.

5 Lifestyle Steps to Lower BP

High blood pressure can take you by surprise, starting slowly and silently. While it doesn't cause symptoms, over time it raises your risk for heart disease, stroke or kidney failure.

If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure (HBP), the main way to lower it and prevent complications is to take prescription medication. More than 5 million Canadians have hypertension.

Besides not taking HBP medication as prescribed, simple lifestyle changes are also often overlooked. Researchers have identified these 5 practical steps are proven to lower blood pressure.

STEP 1 Monitor your salt intake. Processed foods are the main source, so check labels. Limit sodium to 2,400 mg a day – about 1 teaspoon/5ml of sodium chloride (salt). Excess salt in susceptible people causes blood pressure to rise and medicines to work less efficiently.

STEP 2 Fit in exercise. The key is to find activities that you enjoy. How about biking, swimming, or brisk walking at lunch? The goal is 30-60 minutes of moderate exercise at least 5 days a week, with your provider's okay.

MORE INFO ▶ Heart and Stroke Foundation:
www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.ikiQLcMWJtE/b.3751067/

Sunscreen 101

Which type is best for you?

Modern sunscreens have come a long way since a pharmacist first created a cream for World War II soldiers who were suffering from sunburn. Today we have a wide variety of sunscreens that help reduce harmful ultraviolet rays. But what's the best *type* for you?

Sunscreen choices:

- Lotions and gels are less oily than creams, making them better for skin conditions such as acne.
- If you exercise or work outdoors, use a gel, which is less likely to drip in your eyes than lotions or creams.
- Look for products labelled "water-resistant" (maintains SPF 40 after 40 minutes in the water) or "very water resistant" (maintains SPF 80 after 80 minutes in the water). **Note:** The SPF number only reflects protection from UVB rays; no system measures UVA protection levels.
- Try cream forms for dry skin and the face, and sticks for the eye area. Use a lip balm with SPF

STEP 3 Limit alcohol. Stop at 1-2 drinks a day with a weekly maximum 14 for men and 9 for women – beyond that amount, alcohol may raise BP.

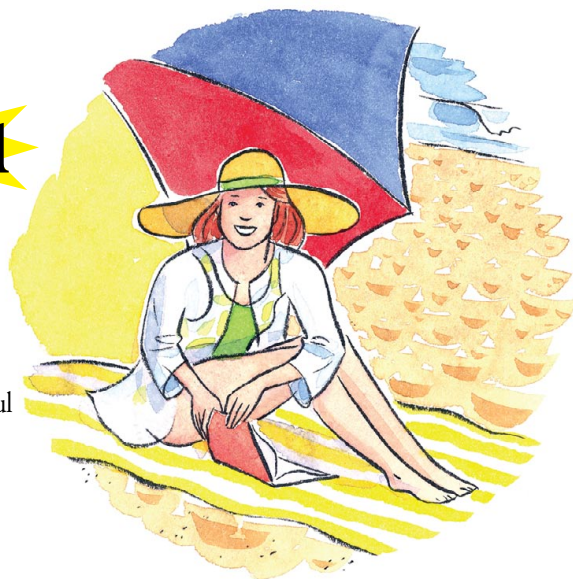
STEP 4 Use a DASH eating plan. The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) study found that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, beans, fish, lean meat and low-fat or non fat dairy products helps lower blood pressure.

STEP 5 Maintain a healthy weight. If you're overweight, even a 10-pound/4.5 kilogram weight loss can significantly improve blood pressure.

Other contributing factors: Smoking a cigarette spikes your BP, while quitting tobacco significantly improves it. Some medicines can also raise BP. Review all the drugs you use with your provider.

Get your blood pressure checked at least once every 2 years by your provider, or more frequently if you have been diagnosed with hypertension.

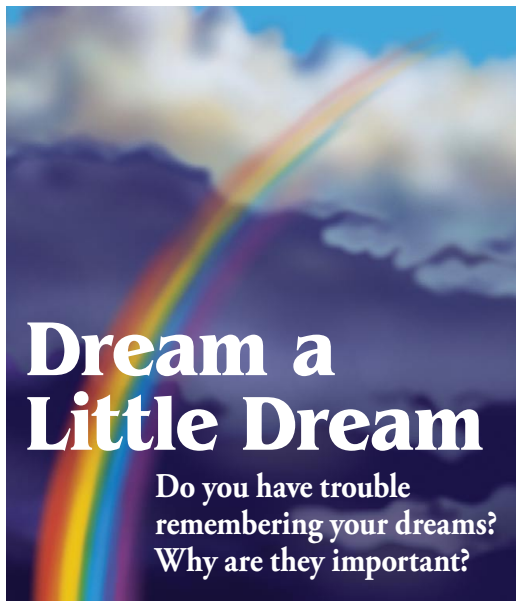
By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP



15 or higher. You can also buy sunscreens for babies and sensitive skin.

- Recent reports have found some ingredients much more protective than others. Choose brands that contain oxybenzone, avobenzone (Parsol 1789) or ecamsule (Mexoryl).
- If you have an allergic reaction, try another type or brand.

Save your good looks! No matter what sunscreen you choose, reapply every 2 hours, or more frequently if you're sweating or swimming.



Dream a Little Dream

Do you have trouble remembering your dreams? Why are they important?

Scientists have pondered the meaning of dreams for centuries. New studies suggest that dreaming offers a real, practical function of helping us deal with decisions and challenges in life. Recalling details from your dreams may stimulate ideas for possible solutions that are more imaginative or unexpected than those from your wake time.

The Buzz on Bug Control



Warm weather takes us outside and into the path of itty, bitty critters that bug us. Take the sting out of summer and help reduce the spread of insect-borne illnesses with these precautions:

Mosquitoes can carry West Nile Virus, a potentially fatal illness. Plus, their bites are just plain annoying. **To avoid bites:**

- /// Wear pants, long-sleeve shirts, closed-toe shoes, socks and a hat – cover skin extensively in areas that are heavily infested.
- /// Use a repellent with DEET. Speak with your pharmacist regarding specific products and instructions for use.
- /// If possible, stay indoors from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- /// Drain standing water, where mosquitoes lay their eggs.

Tip: Dead birds may indicate the presence of West Nile, so report them to your health department.

Research also suggests that you can get better at dream recall and interpretation with practice.

Try these steps to improve dream recall and interpretation for creative problem solving:

- **Sleep well.** Relax before bedtime with a warm bath or soft music. Sound sleep fosters longer periods of rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. During the REM stage, your eyes dart rapidly beneath closed lids, your body remains largely motionless and your brain actively engages in forming dreams.
- **Take a moment.** Upon waking, stay in bed a few minutes to remember the fleeting details of your dream.
- **Keep a dream diary.** While your dream is still fresh in your mind, record the details on a notepad or narrate a description into a bedside tape recorder.
- **Watch for patterns.** Record recurring images and review your dream diary. Note comparisons between your dreams and experiences or feelings in your everyday life.
- **Interpret dreams.** To gain better insight about your dreams, describe them to a counsellor or friend. Or look for books and reputable websites that offer tips on dream interpretation.

Beyond the potential for self-knowledge, enjoy the mystery and adventure of your dreams.

Infected deer ticks spread Lyme disease. Risk increases in people and pets exposed to woody or brush-heavy areas. **To avoid:**

- /// Wear long pants tucked into socks.
- /// Apply tick repellent before going into the brushy outdoors.
- /// Avoid tall grass and dense woods.
- /// Always check yourself for ticks – light-coloured clothing makes them easier to spot.

Tip: You can spray your clothing with permethrin, a repellent ingredient intended only for fabrics.

Bee stings don't transmit disease but they can hurt and cause serious allergic reactions in some people. **To avoid stings:**

- /// Avoid sudden moves around bees.
- /// Don't wear fragrances or bright colours or prints.
- /// Learn these bee attractions: Food, sweet beverages and open trashcans.

Tip: Insect repellent on skin or clothing usually won't keep bees away.

Don't Let Anger Hurt Your Health

Anger is a natural emotion – but it can be dangerous, whether expressed physically or suppressed emotionally.

People who bottle up their anger tend to feel complete loss of control over situations and are bitter and hateful. Having pent-up emotions has been linked to increased risk of high blood pressure, stroke, hypertension, and heart disease. It can also lead to substance abuse, depression, anxiety, lost productivity at work, and violence.

Is anger a problem for you? Here are some questions to help you gauge your rage.

- Do you frequently feel angry or hostile?
- Does your anger stay with you for hours?
- Do you regularly hide your anger or suppress your feelings?
- Do you turn to alcohol or drugs to calm your anger?
- Does your heart race or do your muscles tense up when angry?

If you checked any of these, it's time to take your anger seriously.

What can you do when something or someone sets you off?

Don't ignore anger. Ask yourself: What's really bothering me? Do I always need to be in control? Can I try to express my feelings in a way that won't hurt me or others?

Use a constructive approach. Confront the problem and come to a peaceful resolution. When you get upset with people, for example, tell them calmly, "I'm angry because ..." – rather than threaten or insult, which helps no one.

Find your healthy release:

- Use relaxation techniques or meditation.
- Talk to a caring friend who will listen.
- Act out your anger in your own space with no one around. For example, punch or scream into a pillow, take a brisk walk and get some fresh air. This helps release tension.

Anger will take time and practice to control. If your negative feelings continue, don't delay getting help before they hurt you and those around you.

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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No-Cook Meals

For hot weather and busy days.

Too hot and tired to work over a steamy stove? There are lots of fun and easy ways to prepare a cool, no-cook meal in short order. It just takes a little creativity and some versatile ingredients like those in the recipe at right.

Keep these ingredients handy for no-sweat meals:

Fresh Pickings

Fresh herbs: Basil, mint, oregano, cilantro and others add bold flavours to any dish.

Fresh, frozen or canned fruit: Enhance salads and other dishes with instant sweetness. Add tang and zest with a squeeze of lemon or lime. Of course, fruit makes the coolest dessert or snack.

Fresh or frozen vegetables: Take your pick – peas, carrots, corn, zucchini and cool cucumbers add crunch and nutrients.

Easy Meats

Canned tuna or salmon: Flaked water-packed fish will fill sandwiches, salads and wraps in a snap.

Deli meats/poultry: Choose ready-to-eat sliced meats or rotisserie chicken you can add to a hearty salad or sandwiches.

Frozen shrimp: You'll find them in your grocer's freezer. Just thaw under cold running water and presto! Enjoy seafood fit for dipping or in a salad.

Bottled Specialties

Roasted red peppers, artichoke hearts, sun-dried tomatoes and marinated mushrooms: These special ingredients impart exotic flavours and textures.

Marinated olives and chili peppers: Chop or serve whole to guests for easy appetizers.



Legumes

Nuts: Add crunch and flavour to salads and desserts – and treat your heart too.

Canned beans: Puree chickpeas (garbanzo beans) or soybeans with olive oil for dips or spreads. Add whole beans to salads, salsa and wraps.

Dairy Delights

Cheeses: A small shredding of feta, Parmesan or blue cheese puts the wow in salads.

Creamy additions: Fat-free sour cream, cream cheese, or plain non fat yogurt will moisten and enrich dishes.

Go with Grains

Breads, rolls or crackers: Take advantage of the growing assortment of whole-grain products in your market – pita, whole-wheat rolls or bread. Have fun creating sandwiches.

Tortillas: Wrap up a mix of ingredients or a whole salad for a quick and tasty meal-in-hand.

Quick tip – cool soups: Use your blender or food processor to puree fresh vegetables into chilled soups. Have fun choosing garnishes, such as avocado, scallions, grated cheese, coconut and fresh herbs. Don't forget to try fruit purees, too.

Recipe of the Month

COOL TUNA with Tomatoes & Pine Nuts

Light, luscious and no-fuss.

Dressing:

- ½ cup/122g non fat plain yogurt
- ½ cup/119ml or 121g non fat sour cream
- 2 tbsp/30ml light canola mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp/7g fresh dill, chopped
- 2 tbsp/30ml fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp/7g real bacon bits

Salad:

- 3 (6.5 oz/170g) cans low-sodium, water-packed solid white tuna, drained and flaked
- 3 cups/.55kg fresh tomatoes, coarsely chopped (or halved cherry tomatoes)
- ½ cup/60g celery, diced
- 3 tbsp/45ml or 25g pine nuts

Combine dressing and set aside. Stir together salad ingredients in a large bowl; add dressing and gently toss to coat. Serve on salad greens or roll up in tortillas or wraps.

Nutrition Facts

Makes 6 (1-cup/227g) servings.

Amount Per Serving	Calories	193
	Protein	25g
	Total Fat	5.8g
	Total Carb	11.6g
	Fibre	1.3g
	Sodium	327mg

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