

JUNE 2015

EPIC WELLNEWS

SUMMERTIME IS OUTDOOR TIME



Modern life is largely spent indoors – in front of televisions, computers, games, and mobile phones. Yet humans have spent most of their history outdoors, and gain considerable physical and psychological benefits from time spent in green spaces.

Summer can be an ideal season to spend more time outdoors. The long days, warm weather, and vacation time come together to make being outside inviting and accessible.

Summer picnics are legendary, and it's not necessary to travel far. A picnic can be at a nearby park or pool, but can just as easily be in a backyard or on a porch. Eating outside is fun, and encourages simple meals of salads, sandwiches, wraps, and fruit, among the healthy food choices.

Gardening is a wonderful choice for outdoor fun that involves physical activity, good for all ages, and produces a delicious and healthy result. To get children involved and excited, make them part of the process from the start. Children can help decide where to place the garden, what kinds of seeds to plant, and participate at every step:



PLANTING



WATERING



WEEDING



PICKING RIPE HARVEST

Children are more likely to eat fresh fruits and vegetables when they grow them. It's a great way to expand the healthy tastes of everyone in the family.

After all the growing and eating, the family is sure to want to share some outdoor exercise fun. If different family members prefer different activities, consider rotating who gets to choose the next family event. That way, adults and children get to try new experiences they might not have selected on their own. For example, one child might want a family ballgame, one might want to go swimming, and mom or dad might want a short hike. By doing them all on different days, family members might discover new activities that last for a lifetime of enjoyment and health. Plus it's that many more days spent outside benefiting from green spaces.

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SUMMER FRUITS FOR WEIGHT LOSS



Controversy swirls around the question of whether people who want to lose weight should eat fruit. There is the myth that, because fruit contains sugars, eating fruit will make you gain weight - or at least keep you from losing it.

The facts are overwhelmingly in fruit's favor. Studies show that people who eat more fruit tend to be thinner and don't gain weight as readily.

Summer is an ideal time to enjoy plentiful fruits, such as peaches, nectarines, apricots, cherries, grapes, melons, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, plums, pluots, kiwis, and many others. If you are not delighted with the quality of supermarket fruit, try buying at a farmers market or natural food store, or even traveling to a nearby farm to pick your own.

SURPRISING FACTS

High quality, scientific studies, published in reputable nutrition and medical journals, show promising results for fruit and weight.

One analysis is an overview of 16 other studies of the effect of eating fruit on weight. Eleven of these found that eating more fruit is associated with significant reductions in weight or less risk of gaining pounds over time. None of the studies found that eating fruit leads to weight gain.

A 2010 study in the journal Nutrition investigated how fruit consumption impacted weight loss in 77 overweight and obese dieters. The researchers confirmed that participants who ate more fruit were significantly thinner than the others and lost more weight.

Why does fruit spur weight loss and help prevent weight gain? Researchers give many answers, including the low caloric density of fruit (that is, because of its weight and water content, there are not many calories in a bite of a whole fruit, compared to a bite of many other foods). Other ideas are related to the beneficial fiber in fruit, the amount of satisfaction from chewing fruit, and the many nutrients in fruit that help satisfy the body's hunger receptors.

Fruit also answers your desire for great taste. Bakers and candy-makers try to copy fruit flavors, which are naturally appealing to people. However, real fruit satisfies the craving for delicious food naturally, so that you want fewer empty calorie, processed foods.

Bottom line - you can enjoy nature's best foods without guilt or worry.

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