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EAP Newsletter

The summer health edition

Issue 32
August 2024



Making People Better



In this month's newsletter we talk about mental wellness tips for a healthy summer, why it's important to stay hydrated, ideas for summertime family fitness and how to look after your skin in the summer.

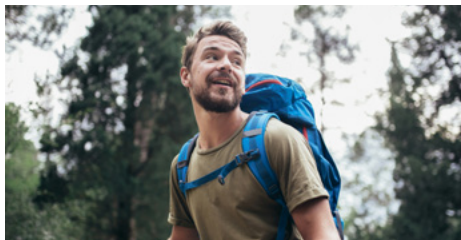
This newsletter includes information about sensitive and potentially triggering topics.

5 mental wellness tips for a healthy summer

When the British weather is on our side, summer can be a wonderful time of year filled with long days of sunshine and warmth.

But just because the weather's picked up doesn't necessarily mean life is less overwhelming. In fact, summer can be really overwhelming, especially if you're juggling a multitude of responsibilities like a packed schedule or childcare and work.

By prioritising your wellbeing and ensuring you put some time aside for self-care, busy summer days can feel more enjoyable and easier to manage. To set you off in the right direction, we've compiled a list of five simple wellbeing techniques to try out.



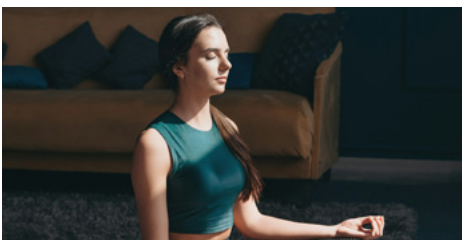
1/ Get outside and get active

The warmer weather of summer provides more opportunity to get involved in outdoor activities such as hiking, swimming, nature walks, evening strolls and family BBQs. Increased exposure to sunlight triggers the release of a hormone called serotonin which can help to boost your mood and promote feelings of happiness. A growing body of research is proving that spending time in nature is positive for mental health, helping to decrease anxiety levels, lessen stress and lower anxiety.



2/ Stay connected with loved ones

It can be tricky to socialise with others in the winter - the combination of shorter days, cold weather, and sickness bugs and viruses that thrive in the winter, result in many people living a more isolated life. But the summer brings with it a fresh opportunity to connect with others - whether that's friends, family or colleagues. Socialising releases a hormone called oxytocin, which is known to be a 'happy hormone' stimulated by hugging, human interaction, and spending time with people.



3/ Set realistic expectations

Whilst many of us get excited about summer and the opportunities it brings, it's important that we don't overload our time and give into social pressures that might compromise our own wellbeing. We all have different resilience levels and it's beneficial to be realistic about what you can handle and what's healthy for you. Try to dedicate some time to personal hobbies such as arts and crafts or mindfulness, especially during times where you feel your social battery is running low.



4/ Be mindful of your social media use

Whilst social media can have a positive impact on mental health, it can also lead to increased anxiety, sadness and isolation, and a tremendous pressure to compare oneself to others. Set yourself a limit on the amount of time you'll spend on social media each day. If you're finding it tricky to limit yourself, try deleting your social media apps for a few days and gauge how you feel. Instead of scrolling social media, you could dedicate that time to using a mindfulness app such as Headspace. Plus, it can be really beneficial to unfollow accounts and people that negatively impact your mental health.



5/ Maintain a stable routine

It's easy to lose track of time in the longer days of summer, and as a result, many of us fall out of our normal routines. This can have a negative impact on our overall health - some people find it difficult to sleep, don't eat well, or forget to dedicate time to exercise or movement. Having structure and organisation in your day may not sound that important, but for many people, a routine is the thing that keeps them grounded. Try to stick to a consistent sleep routine, ensure you eat regular meals and incorporate exercise into your day.



Why it's super important to stay hydrated

Staying hydrated is one of the most important aspects of our diets. Water plays many different roles in the body including removing waste products in urine, helping our digestive system to function and acting as a lubricant and shock absorber in joints.

As the weather heats up and the body naturally loses more water, it's even more important to stay hydrated. But how much do we need to drink, what's classed as fluids, and how will we know if we're dehydrated? Our experts have all the answers for you.



Did you know

Water makes up, on average, 60% of body weight in men and 50-55% in women.



How much fluid do I need to drink every day?

The **Eatwell Guide** recommends that adults should aim to drink six to eight cups or glasses of fluid a day. Children need slightly less and should aim for around six to eight drinks a day, but once they reach teenage years their requirements are similar to adults.

What type of fluids should I drink?

Most drinks help to promote hydration. Water from the tap is a great choice, primarily because it's readily available and almost 'free'. There are many other drinks that count towards our total fluid intake - milk, fruit juice, tea, coffee and soft drinks are all over 85% water and can be included in total fluid intake. It's important to be aware of drinks that have a high sugar or fat content, particularly for children.



Fluids aren't the only way to keep hydrated...

Most of the fluid we consume comes from drinks, but around 20–30% comes from foods. Many fruits and vegetables such as courgettes, cucumber, tomatoes and melon are over 90% water and make a valuable contribution to our overall fluid intake.

What causes dehydration?

As well as spending too much time in the sun, dehydration can happen more easily if you:

- have **diabetes**
- have been sick or have diarrhoea
- have drunk too much alcohol
- sweat a lot after exercising
- have a high temperature
- take medicines that make you pee more (diuretics)

Will alcohol really dehydrate me?

Yes, it's true - alcohol can dehydrate you. Alcohol is a diuretic. It causes your body to remove fluids from your blood through your renal system, which includes the kidneys, ureters, and bladder, at a much quicker rate than other liquids. If you don't drink enough water with alcohol, you can become dehydrated quickly.

How do I know if I'm dehydrated?

Dehydration is not solely defined on when you feel thirsty. Feeling thirsty is actually a sign that your body is likely already dehydrated. There are other things that can indicate dehydration including dizziness, fatigue, dry skin and having very dark urine. These are all indicators that you need to rehydrate the body.

What should I do if I'm dehydrated?

Drink plenty of fluids if you have symptoms of dehydration. It may be hard to drink if you've been sick or feel sick, so start with small sips and then gradually drink more. If you're sick or have diarrhoea and are losing too much fluid, you need to put back the sugar, salts and minerals your body has lost. Seek help from a pharmacist about which rehydration solutions are right for you or your child.



What should I do if I think someone is unwell with heat exhaustion?

If someone has heat exhaustion the NHS advises people to follow these four steps:

1. Move them to a cool place
2. Remove all unnecessary clothing like a jacket or socks
3. Get them to drink a sports or rehydration drink, or cool water
4. Cool their skin – spray or sponge them with cool water and fan them. Cold packs, wrapped in a cloth and put under the armpits or on the neck are good too.

Stay with them until they're better. They should start to cool down and their symptoms ease within 30 minutes. Call 111 if you or someone else have symptoms of heat exhaustion that you're struggling to treat or you need advice about.



Call 999 in an emergency if you or someone else have signs of heatstroke, including:

- still unwell after 30 minutes of resting in a cool place, being cooled and drinking fluids
- a very high temperature
- hot skin that's not sweating and might look red (this can be harder to see on brown and black skin)
- a fast heartbeat
- fast breathing or shortness of breath
- confusion and lack of coordination
- a seizure or fit
- loss of consciousness.

Put the person in the recovery position if they lose consciousness while you're waiting for help.



7 fun ideas for summertime family fitness

It's really important for the entire family to stay active for both physical and mental health. The summer holidays provide a perfect opportunity for family exercise, as you may have more time and (fingers crossed) good weather.

Scheduling in "Active Family Time" for the whole family means you'll be entertaining the kids and contributing to everyone's daily movement goals at the same time. A win win.

Here are seven family-friendly workouts to get the whole family active this summer.



Create your own obstacle course in the garden or at the park



Ask the kids to design a fun workout



Have a pool day at your local lido



Plan an outdoor scavenger hunt



Set up a family gardening club



Go nature spotting in a national park



Do a family yoga session



How much exercise should we be doing?

Exercise is incredibly important for good health - in fact, exercising just once or twice a week can reduce the risk of heart disease or stroke for adults.

As part of the NHS's physical activity guidelines, adults are advised to do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity a week. Children are encouraged to aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity a day, across the week.

A variety and differing intensity in physical activity is advised - for adults strengthening activities will help to work all the major muscle groups and for children this is to help develop movement skills.

We should all aim to reduce the time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity.



A quick guide to summer skincare

Summer's now in full swing and if the British weather's been kind, or if you're going away on holiday, you'll likely be spending more time in the sun.

While the sun's warmth can feel wonderful on your skin, it's crucial to remember that overexposure can be very dangerous. Skin cancers can present in various ways, and symptoms can differ significantly from person to person. This variability makes it challenging to determine if a change in your skin or a mole is something more serious.

Our dermatology experts have shared important information about the two main types of skin cancer - non-melanoma and melanoma - and the signs and changes on your skin to look out for.



Non-melanoma skin cancer

What is non-melanoma skin cancer?

Non-melanoma skin cancer is a common type of cancer that starts on the top layer of skin. It most often develops on skin that's been exposed to the sun or sunbeds, and tends to affect men more than women.

Since the early 1990s, non-melanoma skin cancer incidence rates have increased by 169% in the UK. Most cases of non-melanoma skin cancer are successfully cured.

What to look out for - the signs and symptoms of non-melanoma skin cancer

- **A sore that doesn't heal** - the sore can look see-through, shiny and pink or pearly white. It can also look red. It may feel sore, rough and have raised edges.
- **An ulcer** - look out for an area of skin that has broken down (an ulcer) and doesn't heal within four weeks, and you can't think of a reason for this change.
- **A lump** - this might be small, slow growing, shiny and pink or red.
- **Red patches on your skin** - these red patches could also be itchy. This could be due to other non cancerous skin conditions. But get it checked to make sure.
- **Freckles or moles** - a change to a mole or freckle can be a sign of another type of skin cancer called melanoma.

Melanoma skin cancer

What is melanoma skin cancer?

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer that can spread to other areas of the body. The main cause of melanoma is UV light from the sun and sunbeds.

Cancer Research UK predicts there will be a **record 20,800 cases of melanoma skin** cancer diagnosed this year - up from a yearly average of 19,300 between 2020 and 2022.

The charity's analysis shows rates rose by almost a third between 2009 and 2019 - from 21 to 28 cases per 100,000 people. It also suggests around 17,000 melanoma cases every year are preventable - with almost nine in 10 caused by too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation.



What to look out for - the signs and symptoms of melanoma skin cancer

A new mole or a change in an existing mole may be a sign of melanoma. The **ABCDE** rule of skin cancer is a simple, easy-to-remember checklist to help determine whether a mole or growth may be cancerous:



A

Asymmetrical - this refers to the shape of the mole. Melanomas are likely to have an uneven shape. The two halves of the area may be different shapes (asymmetrical). Normal moles usually have a more even shape and the two halves are similar (symmetrical).



B

Border - this refers to the edges of the mole. Melanomas are more likely to have irregular edges (border) that might be blurred or jagged. Normal moles usually have a smooth, regular border.



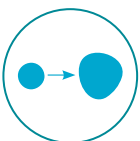
C

Colour - this refers to the colour of the mole. Melanomas are often an uneven colour and contain more than one shade. The melanoma might have different shades of black, brown and pink. Normal moles usually have an even colour.



D

Diameter - this refers to how wide the mole is. Most melanomas are more than 6mm wide. Normal moles are usually about the size of the end of a pencil or smaller.



E

Evolving - this refers to a changing mole or condition in the skin. Melanomas might change in size, shape or colour. Or you might notice other changes such as a mole bleeding, itching or becoming crusty. Normal moles usually stay the same size, shape, and colour.

*Source information NHS and Cancer Research UK

7 summer skincare tips



1/ Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm.



2/ Use at least factor 30-50 sunscreen to protect against UVB. Ensure it has at least 4-star UVA protection and check that it's within its expiry date.



3/ Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin and ensure it's reapplied every two hours, as the sun can dry it off your skin.



4/ Take extra care in the high sun and cover up with suitable clothing including a wide-brimmed hat and long-sleeved top, especially if: you tend to burn in the sun, have many moles, have skin problems, have pale, white or light brown skin, or have a family history or skin cancer.



5/ Reapply sunscreen straight after you or your child has been in water or when the sunscreen has sweated off.



6/ Keep all children under six months out of direct sunlight.



7/ Avoid looking directly at the sun and use proper eye protection.



Need to know:

There's no safe or healthy way to get a tan. A tan does not protect your skin from the sun's harmful effects.



Making People Better podcast series

Skin Health Essentials: Sun Protection and Early Diagnosis

Do you think sun protection is only crucial for fair skin? Think again. Join us for an essential conversation on skin health and dermatology with experts Sophia Brown, Lead Dermatology nurse at Vita Health Group, and Dr. Sharon Belmo, a Consultant Dermatologist.

[Listen here](#)



Our tip of the month

The one thing we ask you to do today if you do nothing else...

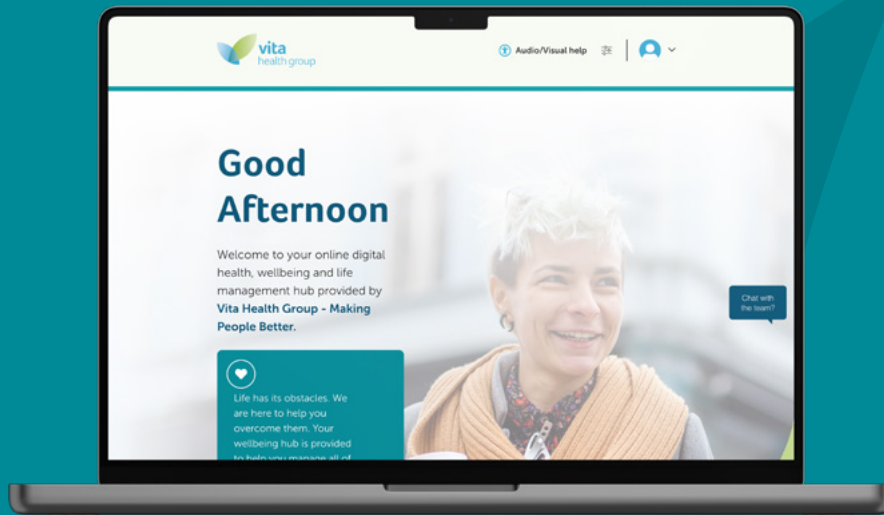
Take a moment to reflect on your own mental wellbeing.

Think about how you can make time for whatever you need to best take care of yourself. Drawing up next steps and taking action will help you to feel in control of the situation and prevent your worries from spiralling.

On-Demand Digital Wellbeing Programmes

included in your Wellbeing Hub

Our digital wellbeing programmes provide the skills necessary to better manage everyday issues that affect your emotional and overall wellbeing.



Interactive, Practical, Wellbeing Programmes

These programmes provide participants with tools and strategies to create small behavioural changes that allow them to reduce stress and increase resilience and emotional health through various techniques.

- Stress programme
- Positive Body Image programme
- Mindfulness programme
- Resilience programme
- Sleep programme
- Money Worries programme
- Parinatal Wellbeing programme
- Alcohol programme
- Breast Cancer programme – Depression & Anxiety

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Clinically Verified

Up to
80%

of participants show improvement in depression and anxiety symptoms.

Up to
93%

users satisfaction.

Up to
65%

of users achieve clinically significant improvement.

Helped over
1m+

users think and feel better.

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