



CIS

Wellness Works

STAY HEALTHY AND WELL WITH INFORMATION FROM CIS BENEFITS!

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IT'S TIME TO GET HEALTHY WITH A DOSE OF FUN IN THE SUN

By Heather Matthews, CIS Wellness Benefits Representative

Summertime. The time when days get longer, the sun's out and you have a variety of healthy, outdoor activity choices. Summer is also the perfect time to remember how to keep you and your family healthy.

Free Vitamin D

Oregon's not known for our big doses of sunshine. Yes, that's an understatement. But Oregon summer months are the best time for us to naturally replenish some of our depleted supply. Vitamin D is one of the most important vitamins (also considered a hormone) for optimal health. It increases your immune system, helps prevent cancer, enhances bone strength, builds metabolism, and improves overall good emotional health.

We've been taught to avoid the sun over the last few decades and block our skin from one of the most crucial reactions. Certainly, we don't want to encourage people to get sunburned but a little time in the sun can really help reverse our vitamin D deficiency. We only need to spend an average of 15-30 minutes in the sun — depending on our skin color — to get the minimum recommended intake. This is still by far the most efficient and easiest way to obtain vitamin D. For those who just can't get into the sun, supplements are available of pure vitamin D or in combination with other vitamins (i.e. multivitamin mixes).

⋮ This summer, go ahead and challenge yourself and your family to get out of areas of smog and pollution and go where you can to just enjoy breathing! If you'd rather not do formal exercise, then nature will do the job for you.

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Oregon has more than 85 farmers markets! Visit the Oregon Farmers Markets Association for an interactive map to view the network of markets throughout Oregon: www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/marketfinder/.

Extra Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Summer brings more availability of fresh, local fruits and vegetables. That makes it much easier to create a diet rich in vitamins. Finding a local farmers market will provide you with the freshest produce. Summer heat tends to cause bodies to not be quite as hungry. This is another great reason to look to fruits and vegetables for quick, nutrition-rich meals such as juices, smoothies, summer soups and homemade fruit sorbets.

More Opportunities to Get Physical

The sun and warmth literally call us outside. This type of weather opens the doors to countless ways of being active, while enjoying the great outdoors.

There are many ways to get more daily activity, so pick your favorite activities and get out there! From cool swims to long walks and brisk jogs, the ideas are endless. If not those, then take a hike, ride your bike, toss a Frisbee, hit a birdie (badminton), kick a soccer ball or try your hand (and brain) at geocaching with the kiddos.

You'll strengthen your bones through the effort. And your heart, your immune system, and your muscles will thank you too! Don't forget to log all of your activities through hubbub to earn your way towards some Amazon.com gift cards. Don't know what "hubbub" is? That's ok, just ask your employer or email the CIS Benefits team at EmployeeBenefits@cisoregon.org — we'll fill you in.

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More Opportunities for Sweating

We know this sounds funny, but getting sweaty during the summer is great for you. Since most of us don't exercise or exercise enough to break a proper sweat during the year, the summer months allow that to happen almost naturally.

Sweating is a good detoxification for optimum health, but we block our pores with chemical antiperspirants daily and don't get physical enough to break a good sweat. So that detoxifying sweat — which is so necessary — doesn't happen.

We recommend leaving the antiperspirants behind this summer when enjoying the outdoors — on nonwork days, of course. Use a natural deodorant if you are sensitive to the scent, but otherwise go out there, enjoy yourself and allow your body to do what it was designed to do naturally — detox!

Sun Safety

We know, we know, we just said get out in the sun. But remember, too much of a good thing can be harmful. Yes, the sun has its health benefits but it also has harmful UV rays that can lead to skin cancers and certain eye diseases like cataracts. So, don't overdo your time in the sun.

According to the American Cancer Society, about 3.3 million Americans get skin cancer every year. In 2016, more than 76,000 of these were melanoma — the fastest and deadliest form of skin cancer.

How can you protect yourself against this? Watch for skin changes — and don't be afraid to ask questions of your family and health care provider. You don't need to avoid the sun to stay safe. Just take simple steps to lower your risks. Prescription sunglasses qualify as an eligible medical expense through the HSA or FSA, if applicable. Sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF of 15 or higher, as well as medicated sunburn ointments, are also eligible.

Thinking about your next doctor visit?

Is it a little inconvenient or a lot? Now think about a world where you don't have to sit in a waiting room, sit in traffic to get there, or juggle your busy schedule to see the doctor. This world exists!

Regence members can access MDLive (sign in required) and Kaiser members can access Telehealth services. Both save time, money and your patience — plus you'll get yourself (or your dependents) feeling better sooner. Doctors can answer questions, make a diagnosis, and even prescribe basic medications (for basic ailments like cold/flu, allergies, sinus infections, pinkeye, rashes, and infections).

Video visits are also convenient for patients who live a great distance from their doctor, who have mobility issues, or whose schedules and responsibilities make in-person visits challenging.

Learn more:

MDLive (Regence members):
https://www.regence.com/web/regence_individual/telehealth

Telehealth (Kaiser members):
<https://thrive.kaiserpermanente.org/care-near-oregon-washington/overview/community/telehealth-video-phone-visit>



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