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Nutrition

Healthy Grilling

Completely Well



Insurance Agency

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Summer is prime grilling season. There is nothing like getting out of the kitchen and enjoying a meal cooked on the grill. However, experts agree that grilling meat can create carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals) and possibly increase the risk for Alzheimer's disease. Another concern is that much of what people grill is unhealthy: hamburgers, sausages, hot dogs, and steaks. But there are many ways to make grilling a healthy, safe and easy option for the warm weather season.

Cooking meats at high temperatures (including grilling) can create chemical compounds that researchers believe are cancer causing. These chemicals occur from the charring of meat and from the smoke created by fat that dripped onto the fire. Cooking meat at lower temperatures can help, as can marinating meat before cooking. Researchers at Kansas State University and the Food Science Institute found that meats that had been marinated for at least 1 hour before cooking had between 55% and 88% less cancer causing compounds than meat that had not been marinated. Lower fat cuts of meat may also reduce these compounds. Additionally, most vegetables and many fruits can be grilled! Grilling brings out the natural sweetness in produce. Try grilling eggplant, asparagus, zucchini, onions, and corn. Grilled pineapple, peaches, and watermelon can make an excellent dessert!

It's important to begin with a clean grill. Cooking on a dirty grill will not only affect the taste of your food, but it can spread dangerous bacteria and cancer-causing compounds. There are many ways to clean your grill. For a gas grill, use high heat for 5 - 10 minutes, cool the grids, brush off debris with a wire grill brush, and then wash with soap and water. With stainless steel grates, you can also clean cool grids with crumbled up foil, baking soda, half a lemon or a steel wool pad. Clean your grill between meals as well as at the end of the grilling season.

Lightly oil or spray the grill with vegetable spray BEFORE heating the grill. This will keep your food

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from sticking and will help keep the grill clean. Never spray any no-stick cooking spray onto a hot grill! Using a grilling basket, griddle, roasting rack, etc. can help you cook fish, vegetables, fruit and healthier options.

Watch children carefully when grilling, and never leave children unattended around a hot grill. Make sure the grill is at least 10 feet away from the house, bushes, shrubs and trees. Use a meat thermometer to insure the meat is cooked to a safe temperature.

Grilling is a wonderful way to create a healthy meal and spend time with family and friends outdoors. A few simple steps can help make grilling a safe and easy option for spring and summer.



Grilling Tips

- Citrus based marinades are good at reducing cancer causing compounds.
- Grill on lower heat for a longer amount of time. High heat creates too much char which contains cancer causing compounds.
- Trim the fat from meats. Dripping fat creates smoke and flames, which creates more dangerous compounds.



Produce of the Month
Tomatoes

Found in sandwiches, salads and the ever-present red sauce on pastas and pizza, tomatoes are both very familiar and extensively studied. Though available throughout the year, tomatoes are considered in season from July to September. Tomatoes are low in calories and high in key nutrients, including lycopene, the cancer-fighting pigment that gives the tomato its red color.

The Basics: This time of year, tomatoes can be found at farmer's markets and grocery stores. Many people grow their own as tomato plants can be grown in a garden or in a container. Available in red, yellow, green and orange, tomatoes are technically the fruit of the plant (because of how it is grown on the plant and the fact that it contains the seeds), but they are considered vegetables because of how they are most often used. When buying tomatoes, choose ones that have the deepest color, indicating better taste and more lycopene. They should be smooth, heavy and firm (not hard) and without blemish. If you wish, buy organic tomatoes, which seem to have a greater amount of lycopene. To store tomatoes, keep them at room temperature on the counter, out of direct sunlight. Don't place your tomatoes in the refrigerator as it affects both the texture and flavor of the tomato. Tomatoes last about 1 week from purchase. Tomatoes will freeze well if you plan to use them later for cooking. To prepare your tomato, wash before using and slice or chop according to your recipe. If you wish to peel your tomato for a recipe, slice an "X" on the bottom of the tomato and place it in boiling water

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for 15-30 seconds. Remove the tomato and place in an ice bath (bowl of cold water with ice cubes). After 2-5 minutes (depending on the size of the tomato), the skins should come off easily.

Try This: The ripest tomatoes taste best when eaten with the fewest ingredients. Slice your ripe tomato and place on a plate or platter. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil, a good balsamic vinegar, some salt and pepper, and fresh basil leaves, chopped or sliced just before serving. For a heartier dish, add sliced fresh mozzarella cheese to each tomato.

The Facts: Besides lycopene, tomatoes are also high in vitamin A, vitamin C and vitamin K. They also provide fiber, potassium, chromium, vitamins B1, B2, B6, folate, and iron. Tomatoes are associated with a reduced risk of many different cancers and may help reduce the risk for heart disease.

Lifestyle

Fourth of July: Lemonade. Parades. Fireworks! Sounds like fun and a great holiday to spend with family and friends. But if we think back to the reason we celebrate this holiday, we remember that it is Independence Day. On July 4th, 1776, the members of the Continental Congress met to discuss and ultimately adopt a Declaration of Independence from England, breaking free from a tyrannical ruler and establishing a new country upon freedom. Remembering this, we can see how the Fourth of July would be a good time to break free from the habits that are hurting our health and establishing new habits for our long-term wellness.

While most people associate New Year's Day with a new start (i.e., New Year's resolutions), making a decision to break bad habits and/or establish healthy habits can be done anytime. The Fourth of July began with the Declaration of Independence, and a personal "Declaration of Independence" is a great idea for improving wellness. Thomas Jefferson wrote in the original document that all people have rights that cannot be taken away: "Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness." These rights apply today, and we can examine our own choices to see if we are indeed trying to achieve these. Are we eating well and exercising? Are we spending time with people who are positive and fun? Are we putting energy into activities that bring us joy? The Declaration of Independence puts forth a list of specific actions and issues that have led to "repeated injuries" and a loss of power. What are we doing that is harmful to ourselves? In what areas are we giving up our own power?

Whether it's New Years or Fourth of July, a birthday or anniversary - it is always a good time to examine our lives for what is working well and what needs work. Declare your own break from the tyrannical habits that are stealing your right to a healthy life, liberty from illness and pain and the happiness you deserve. Celebrate this year's Independence Day with a commitment to your own health and independence. Happy Fourth of July!





Understanding the Zika Virus

- The Zika virus is transmitted by an infected mosquito and was first identified in humans in 1952.
- The latest outbreak has been in Brazil, but Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and The American Samoa have also reported local transmission.
- The Zika virus is usually mild, including fever, rash, joint pain, and pink eye.
- The Zika virus can be passed to a fetus and cause microcephaly and other severe birth defects. Pregnant women should avoid travel to areas where Zika virus has been detected.
- Men who have the Zika virus can transmit it through sex. Use of a condom is recommended.

Warning: All insect repellents have specific methods of application and safety precautions. Follow guidelines carefully!

Insect Safety

Protect yourself from Mosquitoes

Only 40% of the US population uses insect repellents despite the fact that the West Nile virus has been found in 47 states. West Nile can cause serious illness or death, especially in the elderly. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon Eucalyptus to repel mosquitoes. DEET should not be use on babies under 6 months and children should use lower doses of DEET. If you don't want to use a chemical, protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and pants and staying away from areas that have stagnant water. Some believe that using cinnamon leaf oil or catnip oil is effective. Also, some recommend washing with citronella soap.

Do not use natural oils directly on your skin.

Research proper application methods. These oils are safe when properly diluted with a carrier oil.

Watch out for ticks and avoid Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a specific bacteria carried by deer ticks and is spread through tick bites. Deer ticks are about the size of a sesame seed and are common

in many parts of the United States, including the Midwest.

Symptoms of Lyme disease in its early stage include a rash, fever, chills, headaches, and muscle aches. Lyme disease, if left untreated, can spread to other parts of the body including the heart, nervous system, and the brain (meningitis). Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. Prevention of Lyme disease is key. To prevent tick bites, dress appropriately when in the woods or areas that are overgrown with bushes or tall grass. You should cover as much of your skin as possible with a long-sleeved shirt and long pants tucked into your socks. Clothes that are light-colored are preferred as they make it easier to see and remove a tick that might have gotten on your clothing. Once you are back inside, check your skin thoroughly for ticks and/or rashes. Make sure you check both your body and your scalp. Should you find a tick, use tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your body as possible. Pull up to remove the tick. Wash well and apply an antiseptic to the bite. Make sure that you watch your skin for the next few months. Should you see a rash, contact your doctor.



The Social Side of Exercise

If a long walk or run by yourself is what recharges you and makes you feel good, that's great. But for most people, the research is clear. Working out with a friend or family member or in a group provides big advantages. From maintaining commitment to better results, working out with others can be the best choice.

Working out with others can keep you motivated. You are less likely to skip a workout if someone is waiting for you. Also, the friendly faces in your aerobic or spin will keep you coming back! Knowing you are in for a challenging workout together can make that workout seem easier. Be sure to work out with someone who is encouraging and supportive and not just competitive.

Working out with someone can inspire you to push yourself while having fun. Choose to work out with someone who is close to you in fitness level. Or choose a group class that matches your fitness level. You can safely push yourself a little when working out at the proper level.

Working out with others can have a financial benefit too. Group classes are less expensive than one-on-one workouts. Also, personal trainers often offer group sessions at a lower rate than individual. Keeping your work out dates even means you get the best value from your gym or exercise facility.

So, does that mean you should exercise with others? Not necessarily. While there are benefits to working out with someone, that is only true for those who are energized and motivated by social interaction. For others, working out alone is the best way to de-stress and get the most out of a workout. It's important to know what motivates you and what you want your workout to accomplish. Many would benefit from a mix of social and individual workouts.

Ask the Trainer by Erin M. Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

Q: Hi Erin. I've been doing a lot of reading on whether or not to allow myself a cheat day while I'm trying to lose weight. Do you have any suggestions or advice when it comes to this?

~LeeAnn

A: Great question, LeeAnn. There are many different opinions on whether to allow yourself a cheat day or not, so this is my opinion. First off, I wouldn't necessarily give yourself a whole cheat day.

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What I recommend is allowing yourself a cheat meal or two a week but no more than that when you are trying to lose weight. If you did a whole day, it can trigger bad habits again. But by allowing a cheat meal, it's just one meal and easier to stay on track. You can make sure the rest of that day is very clean before/after that cheat meal. I would recommend getting in a good calorie burning workout that day as well; it never hurts to burn a few extra calories when you know you will consume a cheat meal.

Something to be aware of when allowing yourself a cheat meal: make sure it's worth it. If you know you can indulge and get back on track, by all means, it's okay to indulge once in a while. I allow myself one cheat meal a week when I splurge on a good pizza, chocolate, or even ice cream. I will enjoy it and then get back on track with no regrets. This brings up another point, if you are going to feel guilty after doing something like this, maybe it's not such a good idea at this time. I've worked with many clients who feel guilty every time they indulge, even when I tell them it's okay. You never want to feel like this after you allow yourself a treat or cheat meal, so know it's okay to have something you enjoy.

Remember, no one eats perfectly all the time. When you are trying to lose weight and don't allow yourself a cheat meal or even a small treat sometimes, it can lead to cravings. So it can be fine to treat yourself on occasion.

I hope this helps. Good luck in your weight loss journey and let me know if you have any other questions.

Erin

Want to know more? Contact TCU Insurance Agency for information on wellness programs. We can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well-being.

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