



# Your Health Matters

**CCMHG – Your Town, County, District, Authority  
Working together for your health**

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## **Choosing The Best Sunscreens Can Be Tough**

Whether it's cold or hot, sunny or rainy, sunscreen is the one step you should never skip before heading outdoors for the day. Applying (and reapplying!) SPF protects your skin from the sun's powerful UV rays, minimizing your risk of painful sunburns, skin cancer, and premature signs of aging, such as sun spots and wrinkles.

Important reminder: Sunscreen can expire, which makes it less effective. Even if last year's bottle hasn't hit its expiration date, that date is only valid if the product is stored in a cool, dry place, says board-certified dermatologist Lauren Ploch, MD. So, be prepared to pick up a fresh bottle for the warmer seasons ahead.



How to choose (and use) the best sunscreen for your skin: Look for broad spectrum on the label: This ensures your SPF protects against both harmful UVA and UVB rays. (UVA rays prematurely age skin and UVB rays burn; both can cause skin cancer.) Our experts recommend choosing SPF 30 or higher for daily use.

Go for water-resistant options: Even if you won't be jumping in for a swim, a water-resistant sunscreen will stay on longer while you're sweating. If you are doing extensive outdoor activity, choose an SPF of 50 or higher to ensure you stay protected, recommends Henry W. Lim, MD, immediate past president of the American Academy of Dermatology.

When in doubt, choose lotions: They're easy to apply generously and evenly—which is key in order for them to work effectively. "Sprays are inconsistent; I find that no one puts sprays on heavy enough to reach the stated SPF level on the bottle," Dr. Ploch says. Similarly, wipes don't typically provide even, adequate coverage and stick sunscreens require at least four swipes on each area of the skin to get the job done.

**Formula matters:** Physical or mineral sunscreens (made with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide) sit on top of the skin and deflect UV rays, while chemical sunscreens (made with ingredients like oxybenzone or avobenzone) work by absorbing them. Both effectively protect the skin, but zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are the only two sunscreen ingredients currently "generally recognized as safe," by the FDA, per a recent report. That doesn't mean chemical sunscreens are classified as dangerous, explains Meghan Feely, MD, a board-certified dermatologist in New Jersey and New York City. It just means that the FDA needs to collect more data to ensure the rest of the ingredients meet their safety standards.

If your skin is sensitive, mineral sunscreens are typically your best bet, says Ramsey Markus, MD, a board-certified dermatologist at Westside Dermatology. Plus, they're a great option if you prefer a more "natural" product. "All that said, there is no denying that the chemical sunscreens are more transparent, which sometimes trumps everything. It's really a personal choice more than anything," he says.

Too much to keep in mind? Follow this link to [Prevention Magazine](#) they rounded up the best sunscreens of 2019, all recommended by board-certified dermatologists.

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## Eating Right for Your Dental Health

What we eat is significant to our overall health. General guidelines should include balance and moderation and should involve choices from the five major food groups: Dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese); Meat (poultry, fish); Fruits; Vegetables; and Whole grains (breads, cereals).

A major cause of cavities is the breakdown of refined sugars by bacteria, turning the sugars to acid, which then dissolves the tooth enamel. That's why plaque (a sticky mixture of bacteria, food, and debris) removal is so important. Studies have shown that the nature and frequency of sugar intake is more important than the amount. If the sugary food is very sticky, like caramel, gummy bears, or jam, it will remain on the teeth for a longer period of time. If you or your children are constantly snacking on sugary foods or sipping soda pop, you should be aware that your teeth are under continuous acid attack.

How can you prevent this problem? Avoid having sugar in the mouth for long periods of time. Stay away from sucking candies and chewing gum containing sugar and refrain from drinking soft drinks regularly (unless sugar-free). Try to cut down on the number of snacks per day. If snacking is necessary, substitute foods that most people like but that don't promote tooth decay. Examples are popcorn, pretzels, fruits, nuts, cheese, and vegetables.

Consuming sugary foods with a meal or for dessert has a less detrimental effect, because increased saliva flow during meals helps to wash the food away. Most people brush their teeth after meals. Keeping this in mind, it is better for children to eat sweets at a time and place that allows them to brush soon afterwards.

A balanced diet is also important to keep bones and gums healthy. Foods rich in vitamin C (citrus fruits and juices, leafy vegetable, potatoes), vitamin B12 (dairy, meat) and folic acid (spinach, broccoli) will help strengthen gums and supporting soft tissue. Of course calcium from dairy foods and dark green leafy vegetables are important too as they necessary for the development and maintenance of strong teeth and bones. For those who are lactose intolerant, calcium supplements are readily available.



BlueCross  
BlueShield

Blue365

### Take part in the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group Incentive Program!

Make regular preventive health screenings a priority in your life and earn an incentive. Cape Cod Municipal Health Group subscribers and spouses can earn an incentive for completing the appropriate, recommended preventive screenings:

- **Health Screening:** Subscribers and spouses who have a cholesterol and blood pressure screening at their doctor's office will be eligible for a chance to win one of 300 **\$50 American Express Gift Cheques**.
- **Mammogram:** Women subscribers and spouses age 40 and over (or recommended by a physician) who have a mammogram will receive a **\$25 American Express Gift Cheque**.
- **Colonoscopy:** Subscribers and spouses age 50 and over (or recommended by a physician) who have a colonoscopy will receive a **\$50 American Express Gift Cheque**.

Your participation in the incentive program is completely confidential. Your employer will not be notified if you do or do not participate.

FY20 Incentive Postcards will be mailed in July! Be on the lookout for yours!



# Wellness News

## Couch to 5k Running Program

Our next program will be taking place in Barnstable on Monday and Wednesday evenings (new nights) in late Summer/early Fall. Time and location to be determined. Stay tuned for more information coming your way in late July! There is a \$20 fee to join and if you attend 17 out of the 18 sessions you will get the \$20 refunded! If you do not complete the program or attend all the sessions the money will be divided equally among the remaining members! Upon successful completion you will earn → **35 points on our wellness portal!**

## Wellness Portal

Remember your goal is to earn 100 points by June 30th. If you reach that goal, you will receive a \$35 gift card and have the chance of winning our next raffle for 1 of 4 \$200 gift cards! We have a lot of members that are in line to get those cards! ***Remember to keep your address up to date with your employer to make sure you get your incentive right away!***

## Biometric Screenings

We just wrapped up our last screening! We were able to visit 17 different employers! We provided services to 209 health group members! From our 209 screened members, 66 were referred to their health care provider for follow-up. The follow-ups were for blood pressure, bone density, hearing and skin assessments. That's 30% of those screened. The most prevalent referral was for high blood pressure.

If you would like my team to visit your worksite next fiscal year, contact me ASAP as dates are filled on a first come basis and go fast! Please contact me: [capecodhealthyconnections@gmail.com](mailto:capecodhealthyconnections@gmail.com) to schedule your screening today! Attendance at the screenings will earn you → **25 points for our wellness portal!**

## Walking Programs

We are continuing to walk on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in Yarmouth. Join our Summer Walking Program starting July 2<sup>nd</sup>! We will meet at 9am at Peter Homer Park, Old Town House Road, South Yarmouth and walk for one hour. Everyone is welcome to join regardless of age or pace! Teachers come join us!!! [REGISTER](#) for this program that ends on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Attending this 8 week series without missing more than one class will earn you → **35 points for our wellness portal!** If you would like to host a walk in your town please contact me today!



## Spring Steps Challenge

We had a great group for our Spring Challenge with 84 members on 22 teams! The average number of steps for this challenge came in at  $375,011 = 177.56$  miles over the six weeks!! Congratulations to our Highest Ranked Team: West Tisbury!! The successful participants (80% success rate) earned → **25 points for our member wellness portal!** In addition we awarded random prizes: Red Sox Tickets to Ann Christen, Brewster; \$100 Marathon Sports gift card to Jon Nahas, Truro; and \$35 visa gift cards to: Carolyn Savage, Mashpee, Cynthia Tobey, Barnstable, Timothy Sylvia, West Tisbury, and Richard King, Barnstable County! Congratulations!!

## Summer Steps Challenge

Our challenge takes place from July 15<sup>th</sup> to August 19<sup>th</sup>! To successfully complete this challenge you will need to log **196,000** steps within the four weeks of the challenge. That is an average of 7,000 steps a day, using a pedometer, Fitbit® or other device to keep track of steps. Steps must be entered into ahealthyme wellness portal, either on the website, through the HealthyNow app, or through a connected Fitbit® device. You must make sure that all steps are entered by 11:59pm on August 19<sup>th</sup>. The successful completion of this program will earn you → **25 points for our member wellness portal!**

## Monthly Challenges

Beginning this past January we began hosting social media based challenges ([Facebook](#) closed groups). These challenges are open to all CCMHG Members and their families. This will allow ALL MEMBERS to join in on the fun! Each month will be a different challenge and will be body, mind and spirit based. We have a lot of fun in coming up so please be sure to like and/or follow the [Cape Cod Municipal Health Group](#) on Facebook and watch your email for all the announcements! The successful completion of each challenge could win you some prizes but will also earn you → **25 points for our member wellness portal!**

### February Yoga Challenge

During February we challenged members to complete at least 15 days of yoga training as well as attend one in person class. We had 30 participants that took part in the challenge and Meggan Eldredge from Harwich won a yoga mat and towel in addition to being awarded 25 wellness points.



### March Happiness Challenge

During March we challenged members to complete a number of different "happiness" related tasks such as holding a door, complementing a co-worker, taking a quick "mind break" and walking for 10 minutes, etc. We had 25 participants that took part in the challenge and Janet Sylvia from MV Regional HS was our winner of a \$25 iTunes card!

### April Finish Five Five-K's Challenge

During April members were be tasked with completing five 5k's (3.1 miles) during the month. Four or more walks or runs on your own (or with a buddy) and at least one more at a race or group run. We had 16 participants and Margaret Song of Cape Light Compact won Skullcandy Ear Buds and a set of 5 pound dumbbells!

### May Nutrition Challenge

During May members were tasked with eating healthy, sharing posts of recipes, healthy dinners, lunches, etc. throughout the month. We videotaped live cooking demos, posted recipes and also taped 15 1-2 minute video segments from Stop & Shop on our "virtual supermarket tour". We have 37 participants and one lucky member will receive a Hydroflask water bottle!

## Coming UP in the next few months:

### July Summer Selfie Challenge

### August Flipping Fitness Challenge

### September Lunchbox Challenge

# Hot Topics

## Men's Health Month

To honor June as Men's Health Month be sure to schedule your annual checkup!

### Health Facts

Men die at higher rates than women from 9 of the top 10 causes of death and are the victims of over 92% of workplace deaths.

Cause and Rate	Men	Women
Heart Disease	210.9	131.8
Cancer	192.9	138.1
Injuries	54.7	27.3
Stroke	36.9	35.6
Suicide	20.7	5.8
HIV/AIDS	3.0	1.1

### Prevention

Women are 100% more likely to visit the doctor for annual examinations and preventative services.

### Silent Health Crisis

"There is a silent health crisis in America it's that fact that, on average, American men live sicker and die younger than American women" - Dr. David Gremillion  
[Men's Health Network](#)

### The Many Health Benefits of Gardening

It is probably no surprise that gardening has health benefits. For example, you burn calories, get some vitamin D from the sunshine, and if you plant fruits and vegetables, you get to enjoy fresh produce over the summer.

You may not realize that gardening also has mental health benefits. In fact, community gardens have been shown to improve mental health for whole neighborhoods. Depression and anxiety decrease and a sense of a good quality of life and satisfaction in life increase.

It's been suggested that gardening can be a good mental health intervention for older adults in senior centers as well. Again, the reason for this seems to primarily be the exercise, but also community gardening can increase a person's sense of purpose and reduce isolation.

For many, gardening may seem like more of a chore than true enjoyable exercise, but the benefits are irrefutable. You can burn between 200 and 400 calories an hour simply from pulling weeds. That's not much less than going out for a jog. Gardening also builds muscle tone and cardiac health.

In an article from 2017, a scientist named Mashashi Shoga and her colleagues looked at 22 different studies from around the world focusing on the health effects of gardening under a variety of health circumstances and ages. Nearly every study showed a gain in health from gardening, and no studies showed that it was negative. This level of consensus across so many health outcomes is amazing. Some other positive health outcomes they found included reduced stress, tension, BMI, heart rate and even anger.

Children can especially benefit by gardening. They are exposed to nature, learn responsibilities, and gardening has even been shown to potentially reduce some behavioral problems. Some researchers have suggested that children can experience "nature deficit disorder," where a lack of regular exposure to the outdoors increases their risk of anxiety or depression.

If you have not gardened much in the past but would like to start, there are many online resources that can help get you started. Take some time to review them and pick a strategy that will work well for you and your family. Remember that it is best to start small and grow your garden each year as you learn more. [Cape Cod Cooperative Extension](#) is great resources for all gardening questions!

Source: [Daily Herald](#)

## What Happens When You Stop Having Sex

You Might Feel More Anxious: Maybe sex is the last thing on your mind when you're stressed out. But it might help lower your anxiety. Sex seems to lessen the amount of hormones your body releases in response to stress. And an active sex life can make you happier and healthier, which might also help keep anxiety at bay.

Your Heart May Not Work as Well: Research says people who have sex once a month or less get heart disease more often than those who have it twice a week or so. Part of the reason could be that you get a bit more exercise and are less likely to be anxious or depressed. But it could also be that if you have more sex, you're physically and mentally healthier in the first place.

You May Lose Your Keys More Often: Well, not so much lose them as forget where you put them. That's because regular sex seems linked to improved memory, especially if you're between ages 50 and 89. It's not clear why.

Your Blood Pressure Might Rise: Sex seems to help keep your blood pressure down. That makes sense when you consider what it does: It adds a bit of aerobic and muscle-building exercise, and it can ease anxiety and make you feel better. Both of those can help keep your numbers where they need to be.

Surprised by these? Check out all 12 reasons at [WebMD](#)

## Benefits of Greek Yogurt

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Greek yogurt differs from other yogurts because it goes through a straining process to remove the whey. Whey is a liquid that contains lactose, a natural sugar found in milk. Making yogurt involves fermenting milk with live cultures of beneficial bacteria. Strained Greek yogurt is lower in sugar than regular yogurt. Removing the whey produces a thicker, creamier yogurt with a tart taste. Some potential health benefits of Greek yogurt include:

**Improving bone health:** Eating Greek yogurt may improve bone health, as it is rich in calcium and protein. Calcium promotes bone health and can reduce the risk of osteoporosis, a degenerative bone disease. Consuming enough protein is also vital for bone health.

**Reducing appetite and hunger:** Greek yogurt is protein-rich, so it may help people feel fuller for longer. Research suggests that people may eat less throughout the day after a meal that is high in protein. A further study found that increasing dietary protein lead people to consume fewer calories overall, which contributed to greater weight loss.

**Boosting metabolism:** Research suggests that eating a high-protein diet may increase the number of calories a person burns per day. It is best to include some protein with every meal. Despite its protein content, eating Greek yogurt alone is unlikely to make a person burn more calories. But eating Greek yogurt, as part of a balanced diet that includes enough protein, fibrous carbohydrates, and healthful fats may aid weight loss and boost metabolism.

**Improving gut health:** Greek yogurt is a source of probiotics that support gut health. These are good bacteria that may restore a healthy bacterial balance within the gut.

**Lowering blood pressure:** Greek yogurt is a form of probiotic fermented milk that may lower blood pressure. A 2013 meta-analysis of 14 studies, involving more than 700 participants, found that fermented milk with probiotics helped reduce blood pressure.

To read about more benefits visit: [Medical News Today](#)

## Red, White and Blue Salsa

### Ingredients:

- 1 C. fresh blueberries
- 1 C. strawberries, diced
- 1 C. jicama, diced
- 1/3 C. cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 C. red onion, finely chopped
- 2 Tbs. jalapeno pepper, stemmed, seeded and finely chopped
- Juice of 1 large lime
- Salt, to taste
- 9 ounce bag blue Tortilla chips



### Directions:

In a medium bowl, combine blueberries, strawberries, jicama, cilantro, red onion, jalapeno, and lime juice. Stir until well combined. Season with salt, to taste. Chill. Serve with tortilla chips.

**Nutritional Information:** Makes 10 servings: Per serving: 125calories; Total Fat: 4g; Saturated 1g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium: 86mg; Carbs: 22g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 8g; Protein: 2g; Vitamin C: 241%

## The Power of Forgiveness

Almost everyone has experienced being wronged by someone. It could be a former co-worker, friend, or family member. But hanging on to those negative feelings can do great harm to your health. "Forgiving a person who has wronged you is never easy, but dwelling on those events and reliving them over and over can fill your mind with negative thoughts and suppressed anger," says Dr. Tyler VanderWeele, co-director of the Initiative on Health, Religion, and Spirituality at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "Yet, when you learn to forgive, you are no longer trapped by the past actions of others and can finally feel free."



### The Last Word

There are two sides to forgiveness: decisional and emotional. Decisional forgiveness involves a conscious choice to replace ill will with good will. You no longer wish bad things to happen to that individual. This is often quicker and easier to accomplish. For emotional forgiveness, you move away from those negative feelings and no longer dwell on the wrongdoing. Emotional forgiveness is much harder and takes longer, as it's common for those feelings to return on a regular basis. This often happens when you think about the offender, or something triggers the memory, or you still suffer from the adverse consequences of the action.

Practicing forgiveness can have powerful health benefits. Observational studies suggest that forgiveness is associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and hostility; reduced substance abuse; higher self-esteem; and greater life satisfaction. Yet, forgiving people is not always easy. It's not that men can't forgive, but for some it's more of a struggle. It's not clear why, but perhaps these men have learned to suppress certain emotions. "It also can be difficult for men to admit to themselves that there was this great offense that still bothers them," says Dr. VanderWeele.

One of the best ways is to practice forgiveness is with the **REACH** method. **REACH** stands for Recall, Emphasize, Altruistic gift, Commit, and Hold. Here is a look at each step:

**Recall:** The first step is to recall the wrongdoing in an objective way. The goal is not to think of the person in a negative light nor to wallow in self-pity, but to come to a clear understanding of the wrong that was done. Visualize the person and situation and all the feelings that come with it. Don't push aside anything, especially if it makes you feel angry or upset.

**Empathize:** Next, try to understand the other person's point of view regarding why he or she hurt you, but without minimizing or downplaying the wrong that was done. Sometimes the wrongdoing was not personal, but due to something the other person was dealing with. "People who attack others are sometimes themselves in a state of fear, worry, and hurt," says Dr. VanderWeele. "They often don't think when they hurt others, and they just lash out."

**Altruistic gift:** This step is about addressing your own shortcomings. Recall a time when you treated someone harshly and were forgiven. How did it make you feel? Recognizing this helps you realize that forgiveness is an altruistic gift that you can give to others.

**Commit:** Commit yourself to forgive. For instance, write about your forgiveness in a journal or a letter that you don't send or tell a friend. This helps with the decisional side of forgiveness.

**Hold:** Finally, hold on to your forgiveness. This step is tough because memories of the event will often recur. Forgiveness is not erasure; rather, it's about changing your reaction to those memories.

When the bad feelings arise, remind yourself that you have forgiven and ultimately you want good for the offender. If needed, revisit your commitment by reading your journal entries or letters, or recall a shared conversation with a friend.

Your Health Matters is a quarterly publication for municipal employees and family members of the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group. All questions and correspondence should be directed to Deanna L. Desroches, Health & Wellness Consultant, Cape Cod Healthy Connections, LLC  
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