

The York University Staff Association Health & Wellness News & Views

Summertime is in full swing, aka the best season for relaxing poolside, chilling at the beach, evening bonfires, ice-cream sundaes, cottage weekends and family vacations. I plan on making every single sun filled day this summer one for the books. If you're in the same boat, you'll want to be prepared. Remember to pack the sunscreen, bug repellent, healthy snacks, water, life jackets, sunglasses and your camera to take those summer selfies. If you want to make sure your day at the beach is just that - - a day at the beach and not a trip to the emergency room, you'll want to start with a good eye for warning signs of common summer bummers, including sun burn, heat stroke, dehydration, bug bites and other health woes that occur more often during the summer season.

Following another harsh winter, most of us aren't complaining about the heat this summer. That doesn't mean it doesn't affect us. The temperatures can climb quickly and when they do they appear to be perched near 30 degrees for days. Relentless heat plus the ever-persistent humidity can zap your energy and alertness, generally making you feel, not to mention look, quite uncomfortable. Too much heat can be harmful to your health. It can lead to weakness, disorientation, exhaustion, and in severe cases, heat stroke. Heat stroke can be very serious, causing roughly 700 heat related deaths in the U.S. annually. Most heat-related illnesses can be prevented by keeping the body cool and by avoiding dehydration in hot environments. If you feel cramps, exhaustion, red hot dry skin, rapid pulse, confusion or dizziness, find a shady, cool spot and hydrate immediately. Let the body cool down naturally in the early stages of heat exhaustion, but if it progresses, put ice packs on groin, armpits and neck where the blood flows close to the surface. Home treatment is usually all that is required to treat mild heat-related illnesses. However, severe heat exhaustion and heatstroke need immediate medical treatment.

Summer is a time for relaxing and enjoying the warm rays of sunshine, not to mention the benefits of the additional vitamin D, but without proper protection, sun damage can cause a lot of pain and worse, skin cancer. While you should use sunscreen every day of the year, it's even more important during the summer, when the days are longer, the sun is stronger, and you spend more time outdoors. It is important to use a sunscreen with at least an SPF of 30 to protect your skin from harmful UV rays. For those of us with sensitive skin a mineral based sunscreen is preferred. If you plan to be out in the sun for long periods of time, reapply reapply, reapply! No sunscreen is completely waterproof, sweatproof, or rubproof. Wear a wide brimmed hat, dark sunglasses and seek shady

spots for added sun protection.

The phrase "you are what you eat" is especially appropriate when it comes to the health of your skin. Studies show that eating a diet rich in antioxidants can help protect your skin from harmful UV rays. Some summer sun protecting foods include, citrus fruits, high in vitamin C, but also rich in a sun protecting ingredient called limonene. If you crave wild salmon as much as I do, then you are doing your skin a service when it comes to sun protection. A study conducted at Oregon State University showed that the omega - 3 fats found in wild salmon have several skin cancer fighting properties. Including obstructing the release of UV induced enzymes which contribute to collagen deterioration, saggy skin and the development of fine lines and wrinkles. Have you ever wondered what gives watermelon that vibrant pink colour? The answer can be found in lycopene, a type of antioxidant that can also lend red to tomatoes and pink to grapefruits. Lycopene is considered a powerful sun protector, helping to prevent both sunburn and sun induced aging. If you feel more attractive with a tan complexion, keep in mind that there are several very effective and very safe spray-tanning options on the market today that do not increase the risk of cancer and give that fantastic sun kissed glow.

Who doesn't love long, hot days, fun in the sun, and taking a splash in the water. Unfortunately, mosquitoes love those things too. That's because stagnant water and hot weather are the perfect conditions for them to thrive. Fight the Bite! If you're looking for a science-based method of repelling mosquitos, you don't need to shy away from synthetic repellents. DEET has been widely used for decades and studies show it protects against misquotes and ticks. Prefer a natural option? There are several products available that claim to naturally repel the disease carrying pests however, most haven't been proven effective. There is one plant-based repellent that has been deemed effective in recent studies. Oil of lemon eucalyptus extract. For many years, it has been used in China as a product called Quwenling, meaning "effective repellent of mosquitoes." Lemon eucalyptus oil is extracted from the leaves and twigs of the lemon-scented gum eucalyptus plant. It is popular in horticulture both in and outside of Australia. Lemon eucalyptus oil is applied topically on your skin, and may also help with treating muscle spasms, toenail fungus, osteoarthritis and other joint pain. It is also added as an ingredient in chest rubs, which may help with congestion. For further therapeutic effects and benefits consult a qualified natural healthcare practitioner.

Now that you've packed the sunscreen, life jacket and the bug repellent... It's time to hit the water! Summer is the optimal time for FUN, the great outdoors, the water and especially a care free attitude. It's a time to try new things or become better at what you're already doing. An activity as old as time, there is really no need to describe what swimming is. However, it might be worth mentioning how popular it is both as a sport and as a pastime. Think of how good you feel when you're at the lake, local swimming hole or your backyard pool. You dip your feet in, then you jump. It's one of the great joys of summer. It's a great way to cool off and stay fit. Swimming is a full body workout that increases flexibility, burns calories, improves posture, and helps with weight loss. An easy swim helps flush out toxins preventing muscle tightness and soreness. Come as you are. This doesn't mean swim naked, although, what you do on your on time is up to you. Swimming does not require lots of special equipment and gear. All you really need is a swimsuit. The other extras, like a towel, swim cap, goggles, kickboard, pool float (for relaxing) and a life jacket are up to you. Many new gyms offer clean lap pools, and local communities are finding renewed interest in outdoor facilities during the summer months. Locate a natural body of water (lake, pond, or quarry) and explore the joys of open-water swimming. Always swim with a buddy and check the weather conditions before venturing into the water. Be aware of currents, water temperature, and depth when swimming in open water. **Remember:** life jacket wear doesn't only apply to children, anyone can drown regardless of how old they are even if they consider themselves to be a strong swimmer.

#SUP. Once an ancient mode of transportation, "stand up Paddle boarding" has taken the world by storm and is currently the fastest growing water sport out there. No surprise, considering the fact that stand-up paddling has countless health benefits. Almost every muscle in the body is used at some point during paddle boarding. Because of the balance required, leg muscles will be hard at work attempting to stabilize your center of gravity, while the arms, back and shoulders are used to propel the paddleboard in the water. The core, back and abdominal muscles are constantly at work to maintain your balance. We'll take it over crunches any day. Yoga and paddle boarding are a perfect combo as yoga can be very spiritual and using the paddleboard surroundings as a catalyst for a more enjoyable and relaxing experience. Using the paddle boarding adds an extra dimension of balance. This can be a lot of fun as well as very challenging for someone who is already an experienced practitioner of yoga. In addition, the ambiance that is associated with paddle boarding is far more pleasant and relaxing than being in a cramped gym or fitness studio. The sun and water will enhance the experience greatly. Being out on the water is calming and engaging with nature can have a positive effect on your mental health and attitude. In addition, to getting some extra vitamin D.



Placing the paddle in the water and performing a good stroke is enjoyable. Watching your boat move through the water by your own effort is enjoyable. Spending a few hours under the sky, on the water, watching the colours is enjoyable. A couple of times a week for a few hours, getting this kind of exercise is going to make anybody feel better! Few exercises provide the entertainment range of kayaking. One minute, you're gliding through the calm water as you admire the tranquility of your surroundings, the next minute, you're zipping down a set of rapids. Kayaking isn't just a way to create variation in your workout, this water sport has several benefits that can greatly improve your overall health. Let's start with the obvious. When you're out there digging in with your paddle your arms are doing a lot of work. Your forearms, shoulders, biceps and triceps will all be getting in on the action while you paddle repeatedly. A part of body that you might not expect gets a lot of attention when you're kayaking, your back. The pulling motion of your stroke is dominated by your back and if you want to train your lats, traps and lumbar kayaking has you covered. Another muscle group that you might not think of getting a lot of action while kayaking is your core. If you've ever been on the water, you know that stability is crucial and stability in all actions comes from your core. The day after your first kayak outing you'll feel every ab muscle you've got. Kayaking is beneficial for your physical and mental health. You will feel refreshed after a good day on the water.

Just remember that nature is there waiting for you and all you have to do is stop by. Summer is way too nice out to stay in.

Here's to the nights 🍷
when the sand is your seat
and the waves kiss your feet 🌟
..SUMMERTIME!