Food tips for your trip

Keeping meals safe when on the road

When you take a trip, the last thing you want is to get sick. So before you leave, check out these food safety tips to make sure your time off isn’t spoiled by foodborne illness:

• Don’t leave food out for longer than an hour when it’s more than 90°F outside.
• Keep food that can spoil in coolers with ice or freezer packs.
• If you have to pack raw meat and poultry, make sure it’s frozen and stored in an ice-filled cooler and kept away from other foods.
• Fill coolers to the top with ice and keep the lid closed.
• Keep outside coolers in the shade. Cover with a light colored blanket or other item to help reflect heat.
• Don’t drink water from streams or rivers as germs in the water might make you sick. Bring along bottled water and water purifying tablets.
• Take moist throw-away hand wipes and clean your hands often.
• Throw away old canned goods from vacation homes or recreational vehicles.
• Make sure refrigerators and cooking tools are clean before using.

You don’t want any bumps in the road when you are traveling. Follow food safety tips for healthy and happy travel.

Sources: United States Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Playing it safe

Sports injury prevention tips that work

Sitting on the sidelines at your child’s sports event can be fun — and scary. Sports help children and adolescents keep their bodies fit and feel good about themselves. However, the more contact in a sport, the greater the risk of injury.

Most injuries occur to ligaments, tendons and muscles. Only about five percent of sports injuries involve broken bones. To keep your kids injury-free, have them follow these preventive tips:

- Wear the correct protective gear, such as knee pads, shin guards and helmets.
- Increase flexibility by stretching before the activity starts.
- Strengthen muscles with conditioning exercises.
- Take breaks during practice and games.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

Source: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

Walking FUNdamentals

Before you begin a walking program

Research revealed two-thirds of people in the United States weigh more than they should, and nearly three-quarters don’t get the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Walking is a safe, low-impact exercise that is simple and can be added to your daily routine with minimal effort.

Increase your steps and improve your health

Review these steps before you start your walking program.

Step 1 — Talk to your doctor
Most of us are healthy enough to start a walking program without a physical, but it’s important to check with your doctor if you have a chronic health condition, like heart disease, osteoporosis or diabetes.

Step 2 — Buy walking shoes
While walking doesn’t require any special equipment, it’s a good idea to purchase shoes with sturdy but flexible nonslip soles, good arch support and adequate heel padding.

Step 3 — Warm up and cool down
Start your walking program with a few gentle stretches — stretch slowly without jerking or bouncing. Also, give your body five minutes of slow walking to warm up, and do the same to cool down as you end your walk.

Step 4 — Pay attention to your form
Try to use good walking form — that’s chin up, shoulders slightly back, elbows bent at a 90-degree angle and toes pointed forward. Your heel should hit the ground first, and then your weight will roll forward on your foot.

Step 5 — Pace yourself
While you walk, take the “talk test” to ensure you’re not overdoing it. You should be able to carry on a normal conversation as you walk. If you’re out of breath, your pace is too fast. If you can sing, your pace is too slow and you might want to step it up.

Step 6 — Stick to a schedule
Find a convenient time to walk and do your best to stay with it. Pencil your walking time on your calendar and keep it as if it were an appointment.

Step 7 — Walk with a partner
Having a friend, family member or even your dog come along on the walk can motivate you and help you stay on track.

Step 8 — Add steps to your day
Climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator. Park a little farther away in a parking lot. Make every step you take count toward better health.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control; Johns Hopkins University; Mayo Clinic