

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA



## WHAT IF IT'S COLD OUTSIDE OR IF I LIVE IN THE CITY?

Don't despair if you're a city dweller or live in a predominately cold climate. Research shows that having a few houseplants can help bring you many of the same benefits as going outside and being in nature (albeit, it's not a complete replacement).

Research shows that many common houseplants and blooming potted plants can improve your health by helping to fight pollutants in your home. Research done by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) revealed that houseplants were able to remove up to 87 percent of air toxins in a 24-hour period. Scientists noted that you need a plant every 10 square yards of floor in your house to ensure a considerable degree of air detox.

The benefits of houseplants don't stop there. The American Horticultural Therapy Association states that living and working in spaces that have greenery has cognitive, psychological, social, and physical benefits, including:

- Increased self-esteem
- Improved mood and sense of well-being
- Reduced stress, anxiety, and depression
- Increased feelings of calm, relaxation, and optimism
- Increased sense of stability and control

Experts say the best plants to have in your home and office include dragon tree, ivy, ficus, philodendrons, spider plants, peace lilies, ferns, chrysanthemums and palms.

# GO OUTSIDE, IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

Believe it or not, a simple stroll outside could be the powerful health boost you've been looking for. Many studies have linked green, leafy spaces with everything from improved memory to lower blood pressure. Here's a closer look.

## YOUR GREEN LIGHT TO GOOD HEALTH

*Science shows us that nature and green spaces can:*

**INCREASE CONCENTRATION.** A national study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* compared concentration between children with ADHD who played outside versus those who played inside after school and on weekends. Kids who spent time in green outdoor spaces reported fewer symptoms of ADHD, even when the exact same activities were compared.

**MAKE YOU FEEL YOUNGER AND WEALTHIER.** After analyzing two sets of data from the city of Toronto, researchers reported that adding just 10 trees to a single city block could improve how healthy a person feels as much as if they made an additional \$10,000 a year or if they were seven years younger.

**MAKE EXERCISE SEEM EASIER.** Research conducted at the University of Essex showed that the color green, such as that found in nature, makes exercise feel easier. Study participants exercising in front of green showed less mood disturbances and reported that they felt lower exertion.

**BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM.** A large review of scientific research suggests that being outside, particularly in forest environments, has beneficial effects on human immune function (scientists noted that more research is needed).

## HELP INCREASE SHORT-TERM MEMORY.

One study out of the University of Michigan gave students a brief memory test, then divided them into two groups. One group took a walk around an arboretum, and the other group took a walk down a city street. When the groups repeated the test, those who had walked among trees scored almost 20 percent better than they did the first time. The street walkers, on the other hand did not consistently improve.

The science is certainly clear—spending time in Mother Nature can indeed boost your health and well-being!



# GERMAN POTATO SALAD

A German potato salad made with new potatoes, including the skin, is a great way to enjoy white potatoes without wrecking your waistline and metabolic health!

## INGREDIENTS:

2 pounds unpeeled new potatoes (the smaller the better; blue or purple-fleshed varieties are the very best)

½ cup thinly sliced red onions

⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil

4 tbsp seasoned rice wine vinegar

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped or minced

2 tsp coarse dijon mustard (I prefer Grey Poupon Harvest Course Ground)

½ cup packed sun-dried tomatoes, chopped (I prefer California Sun-Dried brand in the bag)

½ cup sliced black olives (optional)

½ cup chopped fresh parsley

## DIRECTIONS:

Steam or microwave the potatoes in their skins until they are tender, but still a bit firm. Cool and store in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Quarter or half the chilled potatoes depending on size. Combine the remaining ingredients in a small bowl and pour over the potatoes. Toss to coat evenly. Serve cold or at room temperature.

**SERVES:** 8



**Dr. Ann**  
WELLNESS

With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit [DrAnnWellness.com](http://DrAnnWellness.com).



ORGANIC  
BLACK TURTLE  
BEANS

OUR PRICE:  
\$2.89 /lb.

ORGANIC  
RED KIDNEY  
BEANS

\$2.89 /lb.

OUR PRICE:

# DO YOU REALLY NEED TO GO *Organic?*

In the past few years, there has been an explosion in the availability and marketing of organic foods, so you certainly may wonder “should I buy organic?”

It may be helpful to first define what organic really means. The word “organic” refers to the way farmers grow and process agricultural products such as fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products and meat. Organic farming practices are designed to encourage soil and water conservation and reduce pollution. Examples of organic farming practices include, using natural fertilizers to feed soil and plants and using crop rotation or mulch to manage weeds as opposed to pesticides.

What follows are the facts on organics, which should help you make an informed decision on whether to purchase organic.

## ➤ CHOOSING ORGANIC IS CLEARLY BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

Benefits include conservation of natural resources and decreased pollution in our water and soils.

## ➤ CONSUMING ORGANIC FOODS REDUCES THE BODY’S EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES.

Confirmed through numerous scientific studies, adults and children who consume organic foods have measurably lower levels of pesticides in their bodies. Keep in mind that non-organic foods are still deemed safe, as they are treated with approved pesticides.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG), a not-for-profit research organization devoted to improving public health and the environment, has determined that the produce that consistently has the highest pesticide levels include: apples, bell peppers, celery, cherries, grapes (imported), nectarines, peaches, pears, potatoes, red raspberries, strawberries and spinach. Spinach, strawberries and celery are the worst of the bunch. Choosing organic for this group of produce will reduce pesticide exposure for you and your family.

## ➤ ORGANIC FOODS MAY OR MAY NOT BE MORE NUTRITIOUS THAN THEIR CONVENTIONAL COUNTERPARTS.

Some scientific studies show conventional non-organic foods are just as nutritious as organic foods while others support the contrary. Studies demonstrate that organics generally have slightly higher mineral content because of strict soil requirements for organic certification; some have been found to have a more robust supply of protective antioxidants.

## ➤ ORGANIC FOODS WILL GENERALLY SPOIL MORE QUICKLY.

Pesticides clearly extend the shelf life of foods. For optimal freshness, organic foods need to be consumed more quickly after purchase.

## ➤ ORGANIC FOODS ARE MORE EXPENSIVE.

You will generally pay about 20 percent more for organic varieties.

The choice of going organic is a complicated one and ultimately depends on your feelings toward the environment, pesticide levels and your pocketbook.



# 16 SIMPLE TIPS TO HELP YOU GO GREEN



According to the U.S. Department of Energy, for each 5 mph you drive over 50 mph you pay an additional **\$0.16 per gallon for gas.**

*Remember*  
TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH.

1. Use power strips. Anything that has a light emitting diode (LED) that glows even after you turn it off continues to use energy (that you pay for). Electronics like your TV, phone charger and printer are likely culprits. To truly turn these off, unplug them from wall sockets and plug them into power strips. Flip the strip switch to cut the flow of electricity.

2. Reduce your speed just a little bit. Higher speeds usually mean more gas guzzling. Slowing down even by 5 mph could help save precious fossil fuels. You'll also save some cash.

3. Buy local produce whenever you can. Not only will you save money and enjoy fresh (often pesticide free) fare, but you'll also help the planet. Typical grocery store produce must travel hundreds of miles (using fossil fuels and thus emitting harmful carbon) before ending up on your plate.



To find farmers nationwide, visit [localharvest.org](http://localharvest.org) or [sustainabletable.org](http://sustainabletable.org).

4. Wait until your grass is truly long before you mow. Lawns are more likely to flourish when they're kept at least 2½ inches tall. The length creates more surface area to absorb sunlight; thicker turf and deeper roots, also means you won't need to water as often.

5. Join the "Meatless Mondays" movement. Significant resource usage and harmful greenhouse gas emissions are associated with raising livestock. Forgoing meat for even one day per week can have a truly positive impact.

6. Take off your shoes when you get home. It prevents pollutants like car exhaust, chemicals and pesticides from being tracked all over your home.

7. Don't run your washing machine until it's full. If you run your dish or clothes washer with only a few things in it, you're wasting water, power, and money.



*BONUS TIP: Save energy and money by using cold or warm rather than hot water in the clothes washer.*

8. Use water filters and reusable thermoses instead of bottled water. Bottled water is expensive and it's wasteful. In fact, according to the Earth Policy Institute, making bottles to meet Americans' demand requires more than 1.5 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 U.S. cars for a year.

9. Don't charge your phone overnight. Getting a full charge takes an hour or two. Leaving it on overnight is a waste of energy.

10. Stop driving around with unneeded cargo. Take out anything you don't need in your car and/or trunk—extra weight in your car decreases fuel efficiency.

11. Power down your PC when it's not in use. Screensavers do not save power. Use your PC's sleep mode or shut it down if you're not using your machine.

12. Opt for eco-friendly household cleaners. It helps reduce pollution and exposure to chemicals. Look for plant-based products from companies that have a complete list of ingredients on their labels.

13. When heating food in the microwave, opt for glass or microwave-safe ceramics, not plastic. Not only can the plastic be wasteful, but when

many plastics are heated they release hormone-disrupting compounds. Remember plastics labeled "microwave-safe" simply mean that they can withstand a higher temperature before losing their shape.

14. Stay away from wasteful products at your local coffee shop. This includes individually packaged sugars, creamers and throwaway stir sticks. If your favorite coffee shop doesn't offer alternatives (like creamers in thermoses), consider politely asking them to change their ways.



*BONUS TIP: Take your own mug to the coffee shop. Some shops will even give you a discount for bringing your own cup.*

15. Exercise outside whenever you can. Instead of increasing your energy consumption via home and gym exercise machines, take advantage of hiking and biking trails in your area.

16. Seek products with an Energy Star label. Sponsored by the EPA and the Department of Energy, Energy Star labels guarantee that products are energy-efficient. For example, a battery charger labeled with the Energy Star logo will use 35 percent less energy than a standard one. Find more info at [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).



It's normal for bruises to turn colors, including purplish black, reddish blue, or yellowish green.

### Why Do Some People Bruise More Easily than Others?

Some people may bruise with the slightest bump; perhaps they may not remember what caused a bruise in the first place. **Bruising easily does not mean you have a serious health problem**, especially if bruising is minimal or only shows up once in a while.

You may have a higher tendency to bruise if:

- You're an older adult—as you get older, you may bruise more easily because skin becomes less flexible and thinner with age. This, along with skin damage from exposure to the sun, causes blood vessels to break easily. When blood vessels break bruising occurs.
- You're female—women bruise more easily than men, especially from minor injuries on the thighs and upper arms.
- You have a family history—a tendency to bruise easily sometimes runs in families.
- You're on medications—some medications may have an impact on blood flow or skin tissue. Talk with your doctor about side effects or if you're experiencing frequent and/or unexplained bruising since taking your medication.

# BRUISE NEWS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW & WHEN TO SEEK TREATMENT

At some point everyone will experience a bruise. Bruises are a very common, yet usually harmless skin condition. However, in some cases, a bruise could point to a more serious medical issue. Here's what you need to know the next time you see the tell-tale black-and-blue discoloration on your skin.

Bruises occur when small blood vessels under the skin tear or rupture, usually from an injury, like a bump or fall. Most bruises are not a cause for concern and will go away on their own within a few weeks.

### YOU CAN SPEED HEALING AND RECOVERY IF YOU

- ✓ Elevate and rest the injured area (if possible)
- ✓ Use an ice pack on the affected area for 10-15 minutes a few times a day (be sure to place a thin cloth or towel in between the pack and your skin)
- ✓ Consider an over-the-counter pain reliever like acetaminophen or ibuprofen if you're experiencing discomfort and/or swelling

### CAUSE FOR CONCERN

You should contact a healthcare professional if any of the following apply:

- ✓ Severe pain
- ✓ Pain three days after a seemingly minor injury
- ✓ An inability to use or move the bruised body part
- ✓ Signs of infection, including fever, increased pain, swelling, warmth, redness or red streaks leading from the bruise
- ✓ A lump that has formed over the bruise
- ✓ Abnormal bleeding elsewhere, such as from your nose or gums or in urine or stool
- ✓ Sudden and/or frequent bruising, with no prior history of bruising

These signs and symptoms may indicate a more serious problem such as a sprain, fracture, blood-clotting or a blood-related disease



# Hydration Clarification

Many people underestimate the importance of staying hydrated, but drinking enough water while you're out and about is essential for many reasons. For one, when you're well-hydrated your heart doesn't have to work as hard to pump blood to your body allowing oxygen and nutrients to be transported more efficiently to your muscles. Not only does this mean less stress on your body, but it also equates to a more effective workout. Consider this: you're dehydrated, you will struggle to perform any type of movement. Feelings of fatigue, cramping and soreness will kick in much more quickly when you're parched, which may cause you to cut your workout short or give up altogether. On the other hand, when you're well-hydrated you will likely feel stronger and will be able to work out longer and more effectively.

Plain and simple, if you're moving your body, you're going to need to drink some water.

## How Much Do I Need?

The amount of water you need depends on a few factors like the weather (if you're exercising outside), as well as the exercise intensity and duration. For most people and activities, following these simple tips will help ensure you're properly hydrated and healthy.

**Drink water before exercise and throughout the day.** Being well-hydrated before you begin moving around is key. Aim to drink 15 to 20 ounces of water one to two hours before you work out.

**Drink water during exercise—let thirst be your guide.** Drinking about 8 ounces of water every 15 minutes is a good guideline too.

**Drink water after exercise.** Again, let thirst be your guide. If you've had an intense workout you do want to be a little more diligent. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends weighing yourself before and after your workout and drinking about 20 ounces of water for every pound lost through sweat.

You may need to drink more if you're sweating heavily, in high heat, or if you have a medical condition like diabetes or heart disease.

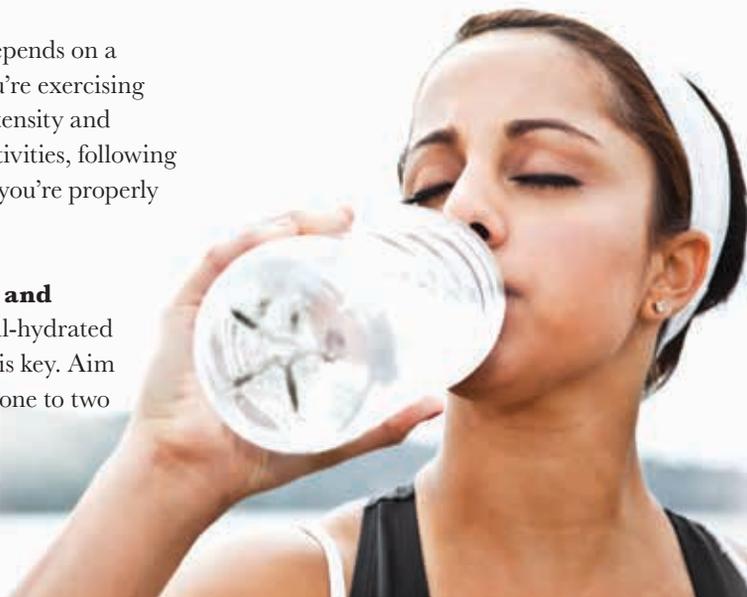
Keep in mind that there is such a condition as over-hydration. Too many fluids can cause levels of sodium in your blood to get too low. Although rare, it can be fatal. There is no reason to go overboard. Let these tips as well as thirst be your guide.

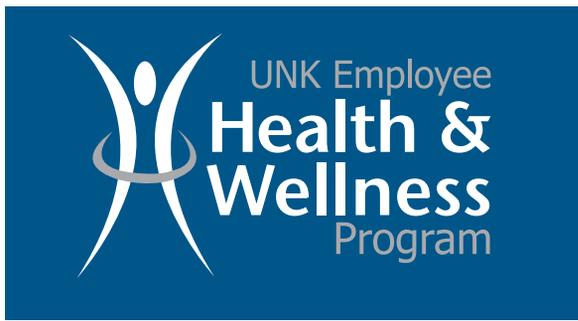
## NEED ANOTHER REASON TO KEEP SIPPING?

Research from the University of Illinois revealed that people who increase their water intake by one percent ended up eating fewer calories, saturated fat, sugar, sodium and cholesterol.

The findings are based on the nutrition habits of more than 18,300 U.S. adults. Those who increased their intake of water by one, two or three cups daily reaped these benefits:

- One extra glass of water each day was tied to eating 68 fewer calories
- Three extra cups of water each day was tied to eating 205 fewer calories, which could lead to losing about a half pound each week
- Sodium intake decreased by 78 to 235 milligrams depending on how much water was consumed
- Sugar intake decreased by 5 to 18 grams
- Cholesterol intake decreased by about 7 to 21 milligrams daily





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## DID YOU KNOW?

**\$10K**

ADDING 10 TREES TO A SINGLE CITY BLOCK COULD IMPROVE HOW HEALTHY A PERSON FEELS AS MUCH AS IF THEY MADE AN ADDITIONAL \$10,000 A YEAR OR IF THEY WERE SEVEN YEARS YOUNGER.

**35**  
PERCENT

A BATTERY CHARGER LABELED WITH THE ENERGY STAR LOGO WILL USE 35 PERCENT LESS ENERGY THAN A STANDARD ONE.

**68**  
CALORIES

ONE STUDY HAS REVEALED THAT JUST ONE EXTRA GLASS OF WATER EACH DAY WAS TIED TO EATING 68 FEWER CALORIES.



## HARMFUL HABITS

There are things we do (or don't do) that unfortunately harm the planet often without knowing it. Here's a look at some common habits that aren't doing planet Earth any favors.

**THROWING AWAY ELECTRONICS AND BATTERIES.** Tossing old electronics and several types of batteries into the regular garbage can contaminate the environment. If not disposed of properly, these items can cause *lead, arsenic, mercury* and other toxic chemicals to leech into the earth. Contact your local trash service for information on hazardous waste options.

**TOSSING PLASTIC BOTTLES AND ALUMINUM CANS INTO THE REGULAR TRASH.** Recycling options are everywhere (workplaces, trash companies, restaurants, retailers, etc.). Make a conscious choice to hold off tossing a can or bottle until you can find a recycling bin for it. It's easy and it truly does help prevent landfill waste and pollution.

**USING PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS.** Millions of barrels of oil are used to produce plastic shopping bags—most of which are tossed into the trash and end up polluting the environment. Switch to reusable bags and bring them to the store with you—it's common practice so no need to feel uncomfortable about it!

**BUYING DVDS.** Almost every movie or TV show can now be downloaded or bought through a streaming service. Help save the petroleum and resources used to create the physical copies by opting for the electronic ones.

## WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?



**42.6**  
**BILLION**  
**WATER BOTTLES**

According to the Container Recycling Institute, Americans buy an estimated 42.6 billion single-serving (1 liter or less) plastic water bottles each year. Almost eight out of 10 end up in a landfill or incinerator.



**1**  
**REUSABLE**  
**WATER THERMOS**

Buying just one reusable water thermos and drinking from a water filter could help reduce plastic water bottle waste and dramatically help the planet.

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