

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM THE SUN

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light can be harmful to your skin. In fact, most skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to UV light. UV light mainly comes from the sun. But harmful UV light can also come from tanning beds and sun lamps. There are things you can do to help reduce exposure to UV light—for yourself and your children.

Children need special attention to keep them protected from the sun. They usually spend more time outdoors and burn more easily. Babies younger than 6 months old should be kept out of direct sunlight. They should also wear hats and protective clothing. Sunscreen used on babies should only be put on small areas of exposed skin.

### Stay in the Shade

Staying in the shade is one of the best ways to help prevent UV exposure. Try to stay out of direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when UV light is strongest.

Tip: Use the shadow test to see how strong the sun's rays are. If your shadow is shorter than you are, the sun's rays are the strongest. Be sure to protect yourself.

### Wear clothes to cover your skin

Long-sleeved shirts, long pants, or long skirts cover the most skin and are the most protective. Some clothing is made with UV protection.

### Use sunscreen and apply it correctly

Sunscreen can help protect your skin from the sun's UV rays. Use products with broad-spectrum protection (against

both UVA and UVB rays). And choose a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher.

Be sure to check the expiration date. Sunscreen is usually good for 2 to 3 years. And don't forget to protect your lips by using a lip balm with sunscreen.



Sunscreen needs to be put on at least every 2 hours, but check the label just to be sure. Sunscreen can wash off when you sweat or swim and wipe off with a towel. So, sunscreen may need to be reapplied more often, even if it is "water resistant."

Tip: Use at least 1 ounce of sunscreen (about a shot glass or enough to fill the palm of your hand) to cover your arms, legs, neck, and face.

It's important to remember that sunscreen is just a filter. It does not block all UV rays. Use it, but take other steps to protect yourself, too.

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## Health & Human Science News

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### May 2024

- 12 Happy Mother's Day!
- 13 Extension Homemaker's Executive Council Meeting, 2:00 PM
- 13 Extension Homemaker's President's Council Meeting, 3:00 PM
- 13 Extension Homemaker Club Dues to County Treasurer—\$20 per member
- 16 Extension Homemaker's Festival, 6:00 PM, Community Center, 4-H Park
- 18 Master Gardener Plant Sale, 4-H Park, 8 AM—12 PM
- 29 Memorial Day—County Offices Closed

#### June 2024

- 10-12 Home & Family Conference
- 16 Happy Father's Day!

#### July 2024

- 4 Independence Day, County Offices Closed
- 8 Extension Homemaker's Executive Council Meeting, 2:00 PM
- 8 Extension Homemaker's President's Council Meeting, 3:00 PM
- 13—18 Wells County 4-H Fair

### ServSafe Classes Offered

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service will be offering Retail Food Certification classes for food handlers who need to obtain a Retail Food Certificate.

Cost for this training is:

- Training, Exam, and Manual—\$165
- Training and Exam—\$115
- Exam With Manual—\$115
- Exam Only—\$65



#### **MAY 22, 2024**

##### **1-day Training/Exam**

Life Church Café of Hope  
900 E State Street  
Huntington, IN 46750

8:30 AM—4:00 PM  
Exam at 4:00 PM

Register at:  
<https://cvent.me/1dyOXq>

#### **AUGUST 13 & 20, 2024**

Wells County Community Center  
1240 4-H Park Road  
Bluffton, IN 46714

##### **1-day Training—August 13**

8:30 AM—4:00 PM

##### **Exam—August 20**

9:00 AM

Register at:  
<https://cvent.me/r8w1k2>

For more information, go to <https://www.purdue.edu/servsafe>, or contact the Purdue Education Store by phone, 765-494-6794, or email, [edustore@purdue.edu](mailto:edustore@purdue.edu)

# THE OUTDOORS AND NATURE

Spending time in nature is linked to many positive mental health outcomes—improved focus, lower stress, better mood, and reduced risk of developing a mental health condition. Most studies on nature and well-being look at green spaces like parks and forests, but researchers are also beginning to look at blue spaces—places with ocean and river views. However, you don't need a picture-perfect outdoor experience to get the benefits of nature.

## Plants and Green Space

Seventy percent of respondents to a Mental Health America Connection Survey reported wishing they had more time outdoors, ideally in nature away from their neighborhoods. Cities often have more stressors to physical and mental health, but green space (like parks and gardens) can reduce their impact. Even spending some time in your backyard (if you have one) can produce positive outcomes, and feeling connected to nature helps your mood even if you don't spend time outdoors.

Children living in neighborhoods with more green space had a reduced risk of developing depression, mood disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders, and substance use disorder.

Even being in the presence of indoor plants is worthwhile—studies have found this to improve focus, memory, and stress tolerance.

## What Can I Do To Find Green Space?

Don't discount the little things. While being in the wilderness is especially nice, even city parks, a small garden, or sitting under a tree can support your mental health.

Bring the outdoors in. Adding greenery to your space can have a similar effect to seeing plants outdoors – and some, like snake plants and bamboo palms, can purify your air.

## Natural Light

Sunlight triggers the release of serotonin and vitamin D, which are associated with boosting mood and focus and reducing stress. Without enough sun, these levels can drop, leading to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. Light exposure also has a direct impact on your body's sleep-wake cycle, and consistent sleep is one of the most important factors in your well-being.

More time spent in outdoor light is associated with lower odds of using antidepressant medications and fewer symptoms of insomnia. The natural lighting of a home is known to impact how you describe your own mood. Improvements to natural lighting have a positive impact on overall emotional social well-being, particularly among women and younger populations.

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### ***How to Protect Yourself and Your Family From the Sun***

#### **Wear a wide brim hat**

Be sure that your hat protects the eyes, forehead, nose, scalp, and ears. A hat with a 2 or 3-inch brim all around is best.

#### **Wear sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays**

Large-framed and wraparound sunglasses protect best. Children need smaller versions of protective adult sunglasses—do not use toy sunglasses.

#### **Avoid tanning beds and sun lamps**

Tanning devices can cause long-term skin damage and increase your risk of skin cancer.



Even with sunscreen, you should limit the amount of time you spend in the sun. Sunscreen does not block all UV rays.

*Source: American Cancer Society*

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### ***The Outdoors & Nature***

#### **What Can I Do To Get Natural Light?**

Enjoy the sunshine. Just 10-15 minutes of sun on your arms and legs a few times a week has the potential to generate all the vitamin D you need; however, this depends on factors like the season, time of day, pollution, skin tone, and more.

Try a light box. Light therapy can help with symptoms of depression and sleep disorders. The bright light from a light box mimics natural sunlight, causing the brain to produce serotonin and regulate your internal clock.

#### **Connection**

One of the greatest benefits you get from nature is connection, which is linked to a better connection to self, community, and purpose. Time in nature benefits personal growth, self-esteem, emotional regulation, and social skills. When children connect with nature, they're more imaginative and independent, and they feel more connected to the peers they're playing with and other living things.

Accessible nature in a neighborhood, such as parks, lakes, or gardens, are associated with an increased sense of community belonging. People who reported not feeling connected to nature also didn't feel connected to themselves, to others, or to spirituality/purpose. (MHA's Connection Survey)

#### **What Can I Do To Connect?**

Practice gratitude. Nature is everywhere – even in cities, you can find places like community gardens, little courtyards, or trees full of birds and squirrels. Once you start tuning into your senses and appreciating the unexpected, it often feels more meaningful.

Plant something. Gardening is a great mindfulness activity. Getting your hands in the dirt can help you feel more grounded, and helping a plant grow can even boost your self-esteem.

*Source: Mental Health America*



2024 WELLS COUNTY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS FESTIVAL

# PICNIC in the Park

May 16, 2024


Registration will begin at 5:30 PM  
Event begins at 6:00 PM

Registration forms were mailed to Extension Homemaker Presidents in April and are also available through The Wells County Extension Office.

***Cultural Arts Exhibit:***  
Guidelines for the Cultural Art Exhibit are as follows:

1. The exhibit must have been completed within the last two (2) years and never exhibited at Home and Family Conference.
2. There will be 5 categories for the exhibits:
  - a. Quilts
  - b. Needlework
  - c. Knit/Crochet
  - d. Crafts/Miscellaneous
  - e. Special Project – Table Runner – No wider than 18in., can be any length, can be any medium
3. There should be no visible personal identification on the entry.
4. Entries are due on May 16<sup>th</sup> at the Homemakers Festival.

## MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE



May 18, 2024


8:00 AM—12:00 PM

Wells County 4-H Park  
1240 4-H Park Road  
Bluffton, IN 46714

Need some perennial plants or bulbs to spruce up your landscape? Come out and see the Wells County Master Gardeners!

A large selection of annuals and perennials will be available to purchase at great prices.

Have questions about the plants at the sale? Just ask one of the Master Gardeners at the sale for more information!



# DRY CANNING

Some people are experimenting with canning fresh vegetables their own way instead of following research-based processing from USDA. The USDA home canning procedure is meant to kill spores of *Clostridium botulinum*, the bacteria that cause the potentially deadly botulism poisoning. The latest version of people making up their own method that is potentially **very hazardous** has been brought to our attention through emails and calls to the USDA Hotline. It involves putting raw vegetables (such as corn, green beans, carrots, beets or other vegetables) in canning jars with no added liquid, applying lids and pressure canning for the same amount of time as if you had added the water to cover required in the USDA method.

## What is hazardous about this "dry canning" of vegetables?

- In the pressure processes we have to recommend for home canning of vegetable, the liquid covering pieces of vegetables in the jars is **required** for the expected heat penetration throughout the jars during processing. The food must be prepared and jars filled just as described for the USDA process time to work as expected in killing bacteria of concern.
- It is well known that bacteria and bacterial spores are more sensitive to wet heat than dry heat. They will die in hot dry air much slower than in hot water. So, if the process was researched with water or other liquid in the jars, it is not expected that the same process time will be long enough heating for a jar without the liquid in it.
- The risk here is botulism, which is a food poisoning disease that can be fatal (or kill people). Botulism toxin can be present in canned vegetables without any visual changes to the food or odors. Please read what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has to say about botulism and home canning, and particularly note the section on here called What is Botulism: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/homecanning/index.html>

## But people say it works and like the food...

- Someone can get lucky and not get sick from trying this. Bacteria are not distributed evenly throughout our environment. But the next time, *Clostridium botulinum* or other harmful bacteria can be in the jar and botulism poisoning could result.
- And by the way, some people who have made up this method on their own are adding butter or ghee even if no water. These are no substitute for the required liquid in the jars, either. And these should not be added to the jars even with liquid in research-based processes if not called for in the original instructions.

## Home canning and creativity

- Canning preservation of food is not a creative activity about how to produce the best quality only. Safety must come first, and the researched processes we have for vegetables require the liquid cover in the jars (and whatever is the type of liquid called for in the described procedure with each process, which is usually water for plain vegetables).
- Again, the USDA low-acid home canning recommended processes are meant to be used with the full procedures as written – how to select and prepare the food, how to fill jars, how to manage the step by step canning process in a recommended pressure canner type, and how to make altitude adjustments.

Be food-safe when home canning, please, and stay with properly researched and tested procedures.

Source: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/blog/dry-canning-raw-vegetables-is-an-unsafe-practice#gsc.tab=0>

## NO TIME FOR EXERCISE? HERE ARE 7 EASY WAYS TO MOVE MORE

Too busy to add more exercise to your schedule? When you can't seem to make time for a full workout, try these no-sweat ways to move more in your daily life.

You found your keys. You found the motivation to clean out your closet. Now see if you can find at least 150 minutes each week — a little more than 20 minutes a day — to get physically active! Don't worry, there are plenty of easy, no-cost ways to do it.

Think there's no way you can find the time? Good news: You don't have to do it all at once. In fact, it's better to spread your activity throughout the week. You can get health benefits even if you split it into a few short sessions of exercise a day.



Here are seven no-stress ways to boost your activity level:

1. **Grab the leash and walk your dog.** Your body — and your pooch — will thank you!
2. **Take your kid (or spouse) for a walk.** It's an excellent way to get some face time without screens. Keep it fun by exploring new

neighborhoods or turning your walk into a scavenger hunt. Research shows that joining a group or taking a class with others increases exercise time and health benefits.

3. **Try the 10-Minute Workout.** Stuck at home? Boost your heart rate and brain power with this quick home workout.
4. **Walk and talk.** Even if you're glued to your phone for work or personal calls, you don't have to be glued to your chair. Make it a habit to walk and talk. Some workplaces have walking paths to make it even easier to move while at work. You can also take walks with coworkers to break up your day.
5. **Tune into fitness.** Don't want to miss an episode? Walk or jog in place, do yoga or lift weights, or walk on the treadmill at the gym while you watch your must-see TV shows.
6. **Ditch the car.** Spare yourself the parking stress and log some more active time by parking farther away (or even leaving the car at home) and walking or biking to your destination.
7. **Take the stairs.** The elevator may go up, but it doesn't make your heart rate climb. Take the stairs when you can, even if just for a floor or two. And don't ride the escalator, climb it. Those can be active steps, too!

When you start looking for them, you'll see lots of chances to be more active every day and get a few more steps in during your regular, routine activities. Remember, every step counts!

*Source: heart.org*





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Save the Date!



Join us for the Wells County  
4-H Fair July 13-18!

More details will be available in  
the coming months on our website  
at [www.extension.purdue.edu/wells](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/wells)

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