

THE HEALTHY CPA

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Wellness Tourism

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Wellness tourism is travel for promoting health and well-being. You can focus on physical, psychological or spiritual activities involving nutrition, fitness, stress reduction, spiritual awakening, or a combination of these. The goal of wellness tourism is to turn travel into an opportunity to holistically improve or maintain health.



How does it differ from medical tourism? Medical tourism involves travel to receive medical treatment in a different country or state. For example, surgery or dental care may be scheduled somewhere else because it is less expensive, better quality or unavailable at home. In contrast, wellness tourism consists of trips centered on health and wellness, disease prevention, healthy lifestyle choices and ways to enhance our well-being.

Wellness tourism had gross revenues reaching \$720 billion in 2019. Driving this trend is an epidemic of chronic disease and many Americans' desire for better health. The Global Wellness Institute says wellness travelers consist of two main groups: ❶ those whose main motivation for picking a destination is wellness and ❷ travelers who participate in wellness activities to maintain their health while taking business or leisure trips. The Institute ranks the U.S. as the top wellness economy in the world and No. 1 in almost every category of access to wellness activities.

Any type of travel has risks, such as weather, sanitation, foodborne illness and infectious disease. Consult with a health care provider about vaccines, food and water sources and other recommendations, especially before traveling outside the U.S. Also ask your host destination what steps they take to reduce the environmental impact and habitat destruction of the programs they offer.

BEST bits

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, [Get in the Swim](https://personalbest.com/extras/24V6tools), is at personalbest.com/extras/24V6tools.

Pleasures of Pickleball

It's a sport with a funny name, but pickleball is no joke. Pickleball is the nation's fastest-growing sport and no wonder. It's easy to learn and great exercise for body and mind at any age and skill level.

So what is pickleball? You serve a soft, light plastic ball underhand with a solid paddle over a net to your opponent. Unlike tennis and other racket sports, this aerobic exercise has a shorter learning curve. It's great for building lower and upper body muscles, as well as those in the core.



And with outdoor and indoor pickleball courts available nationwide, it's easy to find a place to play, whether it's a fitness facility or a public park. Pickleball courts are 44 feet by 20 feet, making them smaller than tennis courts. The smaller court makes it easier to keep the ball in play longer than in tennis. The game is played to 11 points, and two to four steps are enough to get a point. While pickleball is a slower sport than tennis, it packs plenty of heart-pumping activity. It improves hand and eye coordination, too.

Pickleball is a lower-impact sport, which means less stress on your ankles, hips and knees. If you have a joint condition, such as arthritis, ask your health care provider about pickleball. To reduce risk of injury, always warm up — a five-minute walk is good — followed by stretching before you hit the court. Stretch after playing while your muscles are still warm.

Did you know? Pickleball was invented on Bainbridge Island, near Seattle, in 1965. The name comes from rowing, in which the slowest boat is the pickle boat.

Strategies for **Hot** Weather

It's official: 2023 was Earth's hottest year since global records began in 1850, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It was marked by extreme heat events, which led to illness, hospitalizations and deaths.

The definition of extreme heat depends on where you live. An example from the CDC: In Boston, 92°F in May is extreme heat. But in Phoenix, the temperature has to rise above 100°F to be called extreme. Even northern regions, such as the Pacific Northwest, can experience heat waves. For example, in June 2021, normally mild Seattle baked at 107°F. On average, emergency rooms nationwide see more than 65,000 people annually for acute (short-term) heat illness.

Extreme heat also aggravates chronic conditions — heart disease, respiratory disease (asthma, COPD), diabetes. Overweight people, those with certain health or mobility conditions, the ill and the elderly are also at higher risk for heat-related ailments. So are people who take certain medications.

Here's how to keep your cool when the temperature rises:

If you have air conditioning, use it. Replace outdated or inefficient models before you need them. Air conditioners and other cooling devices sell out quickly when the heat hits. Follow manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance. Keep all windows closed for best performance.

Electric fans are a tried-and-true cooling method if you can't afford air conditioning. Check them in the spring to make sure they're working. Fans provide relief whether they're ceiling, tower, tabletop or personal models.

Seek out cooling shelters and other air-conditioned public areas, such as libraries, shopping malls, movie theaters and libraries, when you need to beat the heat. Stay indoors during the day as much as you can. Schedule outdoor activities to avoid times when the sun is most intense (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

Check on your neighbors, especially if they are house-bound or unwell. The elderly and those

with limited mobility are especially vulnerable to heat illness and even death if they don't have air conditioning or other ways of staying cool.

Subscribe to local heat alert systems and monitor the weather. Remember that humidity matters, too. During high humidity, water takes longer to evaporate, so it's harder for you to cool down by sweating.

If you must work outdoors, save your most intense activities for early morning if possible. Drink plenty of water or electrolyte-replacing fluids before you are thirsty. If it's very hot, drink every 15 minutes. Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose clothing, and a wide-brimmed hat. Wear sunglasses that have UV protection. Take frequent breaks in shade or air conditioning.

Note: Some communities in Canada and internationally are developing heat alert and response systems (HARS) to prepare for extreme heat events. Check to see if your community has a plan in place.



Q: PTSD and COVID-19 connection?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic has not only worsened the physical health of countless individuals, but has also impacted mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD can occur after a dangerous or frightening experience, leading to symptoms including:

- **Flashbacks** or nightmares of the traumatic event.
- **Avoidance** of reminders of the trauma.
- **Mood** disturbance.
- **Wariness** or difficulty sleeping.

COVID-19 may cause or worsen PTSD because of:

- **Feeling** unsafe. The potential threat of infection often raises anxiety levels.
- **Breathing** restrictions. The sensation of breathing through a mask, or difficulty breathing during a COVID infection, can trigger anxiety or trauma memories.
- **Reduced** coping strategies. Social distancing and reduced social contact may limit key sources of comfort for some people.

Post-traumatic symptoms often resolve on their own in many cases. However, if you believe you have PTSD and are not improving, consider seeking help from your health care provider or a mental health professional.

— Eric Endlich, PhD

TIP of the MONTH

Raw Milk

Raw milk is one of the most dangerous foods to consume, according to the CDC. Even people in excellent health can become seriously ill from drinking raw milk and eating raw milk products, such as ice cream and soft cheese. Why? Raw milk isn't pasteurized. Pasteurization kills dangerous germs with heat. Scientific research hasn't revealed any evidence that raw milk has nutritional benefits. Raw milk from organic (grass-fed) animals is just as harmful as that made from grain-fed livestock. Raw milk from dairies labeled **organic, certified** and **local** is no guarantee of safety. Pasteurization is one food manufacturing process that's safe and beneficial for your health.

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MILK: Not Just From Cows

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Americans have been gradually passing up cow milk in favor of plant-based milk alternatives. In 2023, non-dairy milks accounted for \$3.6 billion in the U.S., with almond milk being the most popular.

There are many reasons why you might prefer non-dairy milk. You may opt for dairy-free beverages if you have lactose intolerance (though you can get lactose-free cow's milk), or a milk allergy, follow a vegan diet or want to avoid products made from cows given antibiotics and hormones.

Here's what to know when you peruse the dairy aisle:

The key to choosing a good milk alternative is an option that is high in protein and low in sugar. Cow's milk has 8 grams of protein per cup, but some plant-based milks have just 1 gram of protein. Soy milk is the only alternative naturally high in protein — with about 8 grams per cup, it's just like cow's milk (almond and hemp milk have less than 1 gram). Some oat and almond milks are now enriched with pea protein to bump up the total protein content.

Check for added sugars. Many plant-based milks have added sugars, especially if they are vanilla- or chocolate-flavored. Choose unsweetened beverages more often.

Keep in mind that while dairy products are naturally rich in calcium, alternative milks must be enriched with calcium to meet the levels in cow's milk. Choose an alternative that is fortified with calcium and other nutrients, such as vitamin D and B₁₂. You may notice that your beverage carton has instructions to "shake well before serving." This is an important step, since the fortified vitamins and minerals tend to sink to the bottom of the container. Shake it up to ensure you get more nutrients in every cup.

What about allergies? If you have nut allergies, avoid beverages made from nuts, such as almond, cashew, hazelnut and macadamia. Pass on soy- and flax-based milks if you're allergic to either.



Summer Corn Salad

EASY recipe

3 cups fresh, frozen (defrosted) or canned (and drained) corn niblets
1 cup chopped cucumber
1 cup diced tomato
¼ cup diced red onion

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley or basil
3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
¼ cup crumbled feta cheese

In a large bowl, add corn, cucumber, tomato, onion and parsley. In a small container with a lid, add oil, vinegar and mustard. **Shake** well, then add dressing to vegetables, and toss to coat. **Top** with feta cheese and serve.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 170 calories | 4g protein | 9g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 6g mono fat | 1g poly fat | 22g carbohydrate | 4g sugar (0g added sugar) | 3g fiber | 98mg sodium



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Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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Wildfire Smoke

Learn more at
airnow.gov.

As events in recent years have shown, wildfire smoke can affect you even if you live hundreds of miles downwind from the point of origin. The smoke from some past fires was so thick it obscured landmarks, such as the Statue of Liberty. Smoke can linger for days, even after the wildfires have ended.

Smoke from wildfires is potentially hazardous for everyone. Struggling to breathe, coughing and wheezing can occur in healthy adults. People with certain health conditions, such as asthma, heart ailments and COPD, are especially vulnerable. Pregnant people are at higher risk, too. So are children, because their respiratory systems are still developing, and they breathe in more air relative to their body weight than adults do.

Whether you live in a wildfire-prone area or downwind from one, there are steps you can take to reduce your exposure to smoke:

- 1. Keep informed.** Check air quality at airnow.gov and monitor news for weather information.
- 2. Stay indoors as much as possible** during a fire or smoky conditions. Protect indoor air by not frying, grilling, burning or smoking. Keep windows shut. If you can, equip one room (clean room) with an air purifier that has a HEPA filter. Set your air conditioner to recirculate, and close the fresh air intake. Do not use swamp coolers. Shut dampers. Do not vacuum. In cars, run the air conditioner set to recirculate with windows closed.
- 3. If you must go out when air quality is low, wear a securely fitting N95, KN95 or P100 respirator.** The number is the percentage of particles the mask filters out. These respirators work much better than bandanas and wet cloths, or dust and surgical masks.
- 4. Talk to your health care provider if you have a chronic condition aggravated by smoke.** Create a plan to manage your health during times of poor air quality. Make sure you have plenty of medications and any medical devices if you can't go out or have to evacuate.

Getting Past Burnout

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Prolonged stress can lead to burnout, a state of physical and emotional exhaustion. When demands are too great, you may lose interest and motivation. It's important to address this condition before it leads to health problems.

Some signs of burnout are:

- Impatience or irritability.
- Headaches, stomachaches or other pain with no known cause.
- Sleep changes.
- Difficulty focusing.
- Lack of satisfaction from usual activities.
- Feeling unappreciated or trapped.
- Coping through alcohol, drugs or food.
- A generally negative attitude.

Keys to managing burnout include:

- **Identifying** the signs early. Know when you're reaching your limit.
- **Finding** a good listener. Whether via a loved one or support group, feeling heard can be very comforting.
- **Avoiding** excessive negativity. Read positive news stories and seek out upbeat people.
- **Maintaining** perspective. There's more to life than your stress triggers.
- **Taking** breaks. Step away from energy-sappers so you can recharge.
- **Engaging** in meaningful activities. What makes you feel fulfilled?
- **Considering** your options. Can you decline or delegate some tasks?
- **Relaxing.** Try yoga, a nature walk or soothing music.
- **Sleeping.** This is essential.
- **Exercising.** When your energy is low, this can be challenging but also rejuvenating.
- **Developing** a long-term plan. Select your top priorities, and keep them front and center.