



JULY 2022
SUMMER OF HEALTH

CARE CONNECTION

BETTER BARBECUE FOR YOU

Summer sunshine brings out one of America's favorite food-related pastime: the barbecue! While we often think of juicy burgers and fatty potato salads as our summer foods of choice, it doesn't have to be that way. Grilling can be just as healthy as it is delicious! That's why we're sharing some healthy grilling and barbecuing tips from the American Heart Association.



1. Pick the perfect protein.

Fish, skinless chicken breast and lean ground poultry are all healthier choices. The good fats in fish like salmon and trout actually have health benefits. And when you grill with skill, your guests won't even miss the red meat, which usually has more saturated fat.

2. Rightsize your portions.

A healthy portion of any type of meat is about 3 ounces, or the size of a deck of cards, and definitely no more than 6 ounces. If that sounds small, just remember all the delicious grilled veggies and side dishes that will be keeping it company on your plate!

3. Give it a soak or rub.

We're not talking about a spa day! Marinating or rubbing spices on poultry, fish and meat can add amazing flavor with the bonus of being able to use less salt. All you need is about ½ cup of marinade or 1 tablespoon of spice rub for each pound of food. Make a simple rub of your favorite spice (such as allspice, chili powder, cinnamon, cumin, garlic powder, paprika or rosemary) and black pepper.

Safety tip: Never reuse marinade or rub after raw meat has touched it.

4. Add color – lots of color.

Just about all your favorite colorful fruits and veggies can be grilled, alone or in kebabs, giving them delicious flavor that might win over even the most committed carnivore. The trick is to cut them into pieces that will cook quickly and evenly. Brush with a healthy oil to prevent sticking or use a grill basket to keep them out of the line of fire. Some favorites include asparagus, avocado, bell peppers, corn, eggplant, mushrooms, onions, potatoes, squash and zucchini.

5. Make your buns whole grain.

Whole-grain buns and breads will complement your healthy feast with extra fiber, flavor and texture. If you're watching your calories and carbs, try an open-faced burger or lettuce wrap.

6. Keep it clean.

Be sure to scrub down the rack or grill pan after each use. Removing leftover burnt pieces of food stuck to the grill prevents burning, smoking and bitter flavors the next time you use it.

Source: Heart.org

WELLNESS TIP!

Limit Your Intake of Refined Carbs

Not all carbs are created equal. Refined carbs have been highly processed to remove their fiber. They're pretty low in nutrients and may harm your health when in excess. Most ultra-processed foods are made from refined carbs, like processed corn, white flour, and added sugars.

Studies show that a diet high in refined carbs may be linked to overeating, weight gain, and chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease.



Sources: Healthline

DID YOU KNOW?

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THE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF DECLUTTERING

If you're looking for an easy way to reduce stress, decluttering your environment may be a good place to start. Getting rid of excess stuff can benefit your mental health by making you feel calmer, happier, and more in control. A tidier space can make for a more relaxed mind. Untidy environments often increase stress for most people. In one study, women who described their homes with positive language had a lower level of the stress hormone cortisol than women who described their homes as cluttered or unfinished.



For most people, decluttering can promote productivity and improvements in mental and physical health. Benefits of decluttering include:

- **Better focus.** Clutter makes it difficult to find what you need. It may also distract you. Getting rid of visual clutter can help you focus better on any task at hand.
- **Higher self-esteem.** When you have trouble staying organized, you may feel out of control. Improving your living space can restore feelings of competency and pride.
- **Better relationships.** Conflict with family or roommates often occurs when one can't control clutter. Also, you may be more comfortable inviting friends into your home when it's tidy.
- **Lower risk of asthma and allergies.** You may think your house is messy but not dirty. But it's hard to clean around piles of belongings. Decluttering can prevent pests and reduce dust, mold, and mildew, which may trigger asthma and allergies.
- **Improved lifestyle and well-being.** It's easier to prepare healthy meals in an orderly kitchen. And most people sleep better in a neat room with a tidy bed.

You'll enjoy the mental health benefits of decluttering more if you make the process low-stress. Use these tips for decluttering:

- **Start small.** If you pick one drawer or cabinet to organize, you'll be less likely to get discouraged. The pleasure of seeing and using a well-organized space will serve as positive feedback, prompting you to do more.
- **Build in structure.** If you invite friends over for dinner, you'll be motivated to declutter your kitchen. If you schedule someone to take your unneeded items, you'll have a target date for completing your decluttering. Make sure you allow some extra time, as decluttering can take longer than you expect.
- **Don't strive for perfection.** There's no need to hide items that you use a lot. Also, try not to judge your spaces against those of other people.

Source: Dan Brennan, M.D. on WebMD

STAYING ACTIVE DURING SUMMER

Summer is here, and so is that oppressive summer heat! It may be tempting to lay out on the couch in the air conditioning all season, but it's important to stay active, especially during the warmer months. Here are some tips to help you stay active safely!



- **Hydrate.** Make sure you're staying hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise. If you're waiting until you feel thirsty, you're already late and need to start drinking fluids as soon as possible.
- **Start slow and steady.** During your first hot weather workout, cut back on your exercise duration (time) and intensity. Temperatures — and weather — can fluctuate heavily during the summer months, so if it's your first time to exercise in the heat, take it easy and get adjusted to the temperature before you really start to push those workouts.
- **Be sun safe.** Wearing moisture-wicking materials and light-colored clothing can be a great way to help your sweat evaporate from your skin and keep you feeling cool. Consider sunscreen (especially ones with all-natural ingredients) to protect exposed skin from the sun too.
- **Watch the time.** Avoid exercising at the hottest times of the day and consider moving your mid-afternoon workouts indoors when possible. If you have to go outside, aim for early morning or evening workouts and pick routes or areas that provide lots of shade. Shaded trails or paths will keep your sun exposure to a minimum and can decrease temperatures by 10 degrees. Keep in mind, though, that shady areas can also increase your exposure to pesky bugs. If you choose trails or other paths like that make sure to apply some type of bug spray to keep ticks, mosquitoes, and other buggy pests at bay.
- **Take a dive.** Cool off and take your workout to the lake or your local pool. Swimming is a great cardiovascular and total body workout. If it's your first time to swim in a while, start slow, go slow and remember to stay hydrated. Just because you're in the water doesn't mean you're not sweating and losing fluids, so hydration is just as important in the water as out of the water.
- **Above all, pay attention to what your body is telling you** and know the symptoms of heat-related stress: nausea, dizziness, headache, chills, muscle cramps, extreme breathlessness and/or a reduction in your sweat rate. If you feel any of these symptoms, stop what you're doing, get cool, rehydrate and seek medical attention if necessary.

Sources: Chad Stanton, certified trainer at Hillcrest Fitness Center

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

NECA/IBEW Family Medical Care Plan
410 Chickamauga Avenue, Suite 301
Rossville, GA 30741

PPO - Anthem
1-800-810-BLUE
(Provider locator services)
www.anthem.com

Rx Drugs - SavRx
1-866-233-4239
www.savrx.com

Teladoc
1-800-TELADOC
www.teladoc.com/FMCP
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Dental - MetLife
1-800-942-0854
www.metlife.com/mybenefits
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Vision - VSP
1-800-877-7195
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1-877-937-9602
www.nifmcp.com