

Rediscover Play

All work and no recess can make life pretty dull. When is the last time you did something for the fun of it? Maybe you're so focused on work and family demands that you forget to set aside time for play.

When you do find some leisure, how do you spend it? Recent studies show that adults have a lot to gain from playing.

Throughout life, maintaining a sense of fun, laughter and creativity is linked with the ability to feel happy. And maintaining that attitude will help boost your resilience and good health. Play and humor can relieve stress and boost energy, help solve problems and improve relationships on and off work.

Play is finding amusement, humor, joy and entertainment in your daily life. Enjoy play and fun in personal ways and those you live with — whatever boosts your mood and makes you smile and laugh.

You might:

- Explore a favorite famous locale online.
- Listen to music or learn to play an instrument.
- Get outdoors (observe social distancing and other protective measures if they're in effect).
- Camp in your backyard with your kids.
- Enjoy humorous movies and books.

Resolve to make play part of every day. And make life easier.



Smart Eating Strategies

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

There is plenty of nutrition information out there, and sometimes it's difficult to know which advice to follow. So, if you're looking for simple guidance, consider these tips for healthy eating.

Always choose whole foods first. A whole food is one that's still close to how it was grown or raised, such as vegetables, fruit, beans, nuts, fish, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy and whole grains. Choose these more often than ultra-processed foods, such as candy, fries, chocolate, pastries and salty snacks.



Beverages count, too. The No. 1 source of sugar in the North American diet is sweet beverages such as soft drinks. Each 12-ounce can contains about 10 teaspoons of added sugar, and the World Health Organization recommends consuming no more than 12 teaspoons per day. Opt for water most often, or choose coffee and tea drinks without lots of cream and sugar.

Consider your hunger level.

When you're distracted by screens, traffic or meetings, you may eat when you're not hungry. That may lead to overeating and cause upset stomach, heartburn, bloating or weight gain. Learn to focus on how hungry you feel. Rate it on a scale of 1 to 10. Eat until you feel just full, but not stuffed. If you're not distracted, it's easier to monitor fullness cues.



Divide your plate. When you plan meals and snacks, fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit, a quarter with whole grains, and the remaining quarter with protein options, such as fish, poultry or legumes. This balanced plan provides the nutrients your body needs.



Immunization Saves Lives

Making sure your child is up-to-date on immunizations gives them a head start on their health and their entire life. Despite inaccurate and misleading information that often pops up online, vaccines have a proven track record for safety. From babyhood through old age, vaccines are effective protection from serious diseases — preventing lost school days as well as potential disabilities and even deaths.

The chances of your child getting measles, pertussis or other vaccine-preventable diseases tend to be statistically low, according to the CDC, and that's because vaccines work and have reduced the rate of these illnesses.

Your child cannot get by without the protection immunization offers if he or she has been exposed to a vaccine-preventable illness.

What's more, by making sure your child is vaccinated, you are not only protecting your youngster, but helping stop the spread of diseases to other kids, families and communities.



August is Immunization Awareness Month, a good time to consult with your child's health care provider if you have questions about vaccines. The CDC also provides information about vaccines, including the recommended immunization schedule for infancy through age 18 at [cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/birth-6-vaccine-schedule.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/birth-6-vaccine-schedule.html).

Manage Your Digital Life

Technology is an integral part of the 21st century, but it has a downside. If you don't balance your digital activities with the rest of your life, you may find yourself with little free time for family and friends, as well as exercise and other good health habits.

Commit to not checking your phone compulsively day and night. This can save you time and may improve your concentration, according to Georgetown University computer science professor Calvin Newport, PhD.

Turn off your phone and tablet (and ask your partner and kids to do the same) while you have meals together and focus on conversation.

Movies, sports and other entertainment are available with a click. But concentrating on online diversions can keep you from enjoying the outdoors in the real world (depending on public health distancing guidelines). Use technology to find and plan activities, including ways to be physically active, and enjoy time with friends and family.

Social media and online groups can help you connect with colleagues, neighbors and the world. But do you need every group, social feed and online friend? Do a reality check and purge your feeds of groups and virtual friends who don't inform, inspire and benefit your life.



Gastroenteritis

Gastroenteritis is a common and sometimes miserable stomach infection. It involves inflammation of the intestines, which causes symptoms including cramps, nausea, watery diarrhea, vomiting, lack of appetite and fever.

There are 2 main types of gastroenteritis:

1. Viral gastroenteritis: Several viruses can cause the infection, but norovirus is the most common, resulting in 19 to 21 million cases of viral gastroenteritis each year.

The disease spreads easily from one person to another on unwashed hands, or from close contact with someone who has the infection: for example, sharing food at a picnic. Viral gastroenteritis often spreads in close quarters, such as in college dorms, nursing homes or on cruise ships.

2. Bacterial gastroenteritis: The bacteria (such as *E. coli* and salmonella) that cause this form of the disease can infect food. Bacterial gastroenteritis also results from unsanitary food preparation, such as using unclean cutting boards and utensils.

Treating Gastroenteritis

Most cases of mild gastroenteritis resolve in a few days. It's important to get plenty of rest and stay hydrated. If you don't improve fairly quickly, call your health care provider, who may recommend over-the-counter anti-diarrhea medicine.

Drink water, sports drinks, broth and soft drinks, taking small sips at a time if you have ongoing nausea. Once your upset stomach feels better and hunger returns, try eating broth, gelatin and clear soups and, as symptoms lessen, gradually add rice and other bland foods until symptoms are gone.

If your symptoms include a fever higher than 101°F, extreme fatigue, unrelenting vomiting or blood in your bowel movements, call your provider immediately or seek urgent care.



Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Vaccination: A Smart Investment** is at personalbest.com/extras/20V8tools.

