

Spring Break Into Health

Make this year's spring break memorable by having fun and helping yourself, your friends, and others stay safe and healthy.



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Limit alcohol.

If drinking alcohol is part of your break, remember that it can impair your judgment and actions. Don't drink and drive. Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes kill 32 people every day in the U.S. This amounts to one death every 45 minutes.

Be active.

Most of the year, you've probably been sitting while working at the computer, studying, or in class. During the break, take the opportunity to start a fitness program. Do a variety of fun activities like walking, dancing, playing volleyball, swimming, and more. It doesn't need to be hard to be beneficial. Avoid injury by starting any new activity slowly. Be active for at least 2½ hours a week and include activities that raise your breathing and heart rates and that strengthen your muscles.

Plan a successful trip.

If you are going on a trip, be prepared. Consider that extra planning may be necessary for your destination. Are vaccinations required? If you are taking medications, do you have enough for the trip? Know what's happening en route or at your travel destination.

Protect yourself.

Love is all around, and so are sexually transmitted diseases. The only 100% sure way to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy is by not having sex. If you choose to have sex, using latex condoms and having a monogamous, uninfected partner may help lower your risk.

Women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence than men. Women who experience both sexual and physical abuse are significantly more likely to have sexually transmitted infections. Take precautions and avoid situations or persons that may place you at risk for harm.

Watch your step.

There may be temptations on your break that involve new, different or high-risk activity. Think twice before putting yourself at risk for injury. Remember that injuries (both unintentional and those caused by acts of violence) are among the top ten killers for Americans of all ages. Before venturing out, be sure to use appropriate safety gear such as seat belts, life vests, or knee pads. Never drive distracted. That includes not using cell phones, texting, or engaging in other activities that will cause a distraction, such as eating.

Know the ropes.

When swimming and boating, know what's expected and what you can do to prevent injury or death for yourself and others. Know how to swim. Wear your life jacket while boating. Avoid alcoholic beverages while boating. Complete a boating education course. Participate in the vessel safety check program.

Protect yourself from the sun.

After a cold winter, it's tempting to stay in the hot sun all day. Although getting a little sun can have some benefits, excessive and unprotected sun exposure can result in premature aging, changes in skin texture, and skin cancer. Always wear sunscreen with at least SPF 15. For eye protection, wear wraparound sunglasses that provide 100 percent UV ray protection.

Eat healthy.

Having fun takes energy and fuel. Be sure to eat a variety of foods, including plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grain products. Also include low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish, and legumes. Drink lots of water and go easy on the salt, sugar, alcohol, and saturated fat. Good nutrition should be part of an overall healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity, not smoking, and stress management.

Be smoke-free.

Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke. Quitting is one of the best things you can do for yourself and others. Just 20 minutes after smoking that last cigarette, your body begins a series of positive changes that continue for years.

Get help.

If you or a friend has an alcohol or drug problem, has thoughts of suicide, or is in crisis for any reason, get help. Call 911 for emergency services, 800-662-4357 for substance abuse help, and 800-273-TALK (8255) for the national suicide prevention lifeline.

For more information

Visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for more information on staying safe and healthy.