

Summer 2024

# Utmost

Helping You Get the Utmost Out of Life



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## The Benefits of Summer Fruits

Summer is a great time for fruit. With more fruits at their peak in the northern climate, you have a lot of options for fresh produce. During the winter, we're forced to pick through product that has been shipped thousands of miles from South America. But come spring and summer, growers from Georgia, Texas, Florida and other southern states can get fruits such as peaches, oranges, and grapefruit quickly trucked north – providing fresher, tastier options.

### **Vitamins and Minerals**

Fruits are one of our best sources of many of the vitamins and minerals we need to stay healthy. Almost all fruits are high in Vitamin C, which acts as an antioxidant and supports immune system function. Similarly, berries are a great source of anthocyanins, fiber and potassium, all of which provide heart health.

Apples and bananas are both fantastic sources of fiber, the best way to maintain healthy bowel movements.

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## Summer Fruits (continued)

Lastly, many fruits, including mango, papaya and cantaloupe are rich in beta-carotene. In the body, beta-carotene converts into vitamin A, helping with vision and eye health as well as healthy skin.

### High Water Content and Relieving Thirst

During the hot days of summer, when we need hydration, fruits are a fantastic source of water. If you're active in the summer, whether it is playing sports or yard games, working, gardening, or any other task, it is important to stay hydrated. Apricots, blueberries, oranges, pineapple and other fruits are over 80% water. Melons such as cantaloupe and watermelon are even higher – 90% water. Rather than having glass of fruit juice, it is better to eat fruit. You'll get the water you need and get the vitamins and nutrients from teh fruit, as well.



### Low in Calories

For most people, a 2,000 calorie per day diet is what gives us the energy we need while also helping us maintain a healthy weight. Adding the proper amount of fruit (and vegetables) to our diet is a great way to get the vitamins and other benefits but without getting a lot of calories. Apples, depending on the variety, typically have about 100 calories, a banana is 69 calories, and a single cherry or grape is 5 or 6 calories, respectively. By incorporating fruit into our diet to balance other foods such as meat, bread, and dairy is critical in maintaining your health.

### Versatility

One of the great things about fruit is the multiple uses. You can eat it by itself, mix it up in a drink, add it to a salad, put it on your cereal, or even grill it. The versatility is almost endless. And, no matter how you use them, you get the rich flavors and nutritional benefits.

Whether you want to take a big bite of an apple, pop a handful of blueberries in your mouth, enjoy a delicious fresh-picked strawberry/banana smoothie, or grill a slice of pineapple, make fruit a part of your summer diet!

## A Simple Summer Salad

If you're looking for a quick, easy meal in the summer, look no further than this delicious Berry Salad.

### Ingredients

- Spring Mix greens
- Strawberries, quartered
- Blueberries
- Walnut pieces
- Bleu Cheese crumbles
- Red Onion, sliced
- Raspberry Vinaigrette Dressing



## June is PTSD Awareness Month

National PTSD Awareness Month is observed in June and offers several campaigns to help people better understand Post Traumatic Event Disorder (PTSD).

Anyone who experienced a catastrophic event can suffer from PTSD. Accidents, violence, war, the sudden death of a loved one, and other events can all cause PTSD.

Symptoms typically include depression, anxiety, nightmares, paranoia, disturbing thoughts and much more. Recovery can range from just a few days to years. PTSD is a mental disorder that is treatable, but the stigma around seeking mental health has caused many to ignore the problem and suffer through it. If you know of anyone who has experienced a tragedy and is showing any of the above symptoms, talk to them today.

## Skin Cancer Prevention and Awareness Month

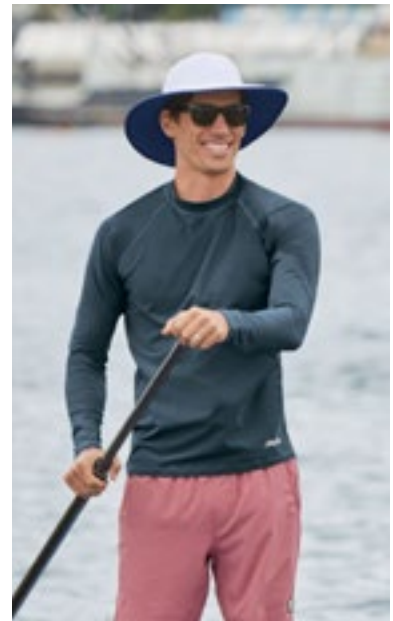
According to the [American Cancer Society](#), skin cancer is, by far, the most common type of cancer – over 5 million cases are diagnosed each year. May is recognized as Skin Cancer Prevention and Awareness Month. It is the perfect time to recognize what we can do to lessen the chance of getting skin cancer and knowing what to do in case it does happen.

There are many different [types of skin cancer](#) and the type is determined by where the cancer begins. Most of these can be prevented by using proper sun protection and avoiding tanning beds. Wearing sunscreen, long sleeves, hats and sunglasses are really easy steps to take to protect yourself.

Some cancers, such as basal cell carcinoma, grow very slowly and can be easily treated. Approximately 3.6 million cases are found each year. But a key to treatment is understanding the causes, risk factors and warning signs. Finding it early makes it easier to treat and cure.

More dangerous types of skin cancer include melanoma, [Merkel cell carcinoma](#), and sebaceous carcinoma. Like others, getting diagnosed early is critical in successful treatment. Please use May as inspiration to monitor any skin abnormalities and increase your awareness of the dangers of skin cancer.

And, of course, see your doctor as soon as possible if you have any concerns.



# Summer is the Time for Light, Delicious Meals

With summer moving in, those of us in the Midwest are appreciating the warm weather and are spending more time outdoors. But with all these summer activities, we may not want to spend as much time preparing and cooking meals. Likewise, with the hot weather, many of us want meals that are lighter, like sandwiches and salads. Gone are the days of wishing for stews and chili to warm ourselves.

During summer months, lighter foods provide energy, nutrition and are better at keeping us hydrated. Popular summer foods include fruits, vegetables, sandwiches, and salads. All of which have the calories we need, but don't have the "heaviness" of the typical meat and potatoes meals.

Likewise, lighter summer meals help keep your internal body temperature lower. The body works to digest food. A large, heavy meal is much more difficult to process and raises the body's core temperature. Consuming a small, light meal still provides the nutrients we need, but is easier for the body to digest.

Hot weather, obviously, causes us to sweat more. Perspiration is necessary in keeping us cool, but as we sweat, we need to replace fluids. Meals that include fruits such as strawberries, watermelon and cantaloupe are a great way to hydrate while still adding nutrients to our system.

Many websites offer some fantastic recipes for summer dinners. One of the best available is from [foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com). Their [85 Summer Weeknight Dinners You'll Make on Repeat](#) offers a lot of options, including [Steak and Potato Kebabs](#) to [Grilled Shrimp with Walnut Pesto](#) to [Barbeque Chicken Pan Pizza](#).

## Give Water the Respect it Deserves

Many of us will head to lakes or rivers this summer to enjoy boating, water skiing, swimming, and other activities. As fun as these can be, it is important that we respect the water and know the potential danger of being in and near the water.

Both the [American Red Cross](#) and the [US Forest Service](#) have excellent information on their respective websites and we encourage you to check out the safety tips on each site. But to provide basic safety information you should heed anytime you are near lakes and rivers is to use common sense and not take unnecessary risks.

So, enjoy the water this summer and have fun, but please be aware of what can happen in lakes and rivers.