

Adult Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

HEALTH BENEFITS OF BEING OUTSIDE

Fall can be a great time to get outside. The weather seems to have cooled a little and the winter chill has not quite come across the Commonwealth. The changing of the leaves can be beautiful and make for a great background if you are being active outside. Not only is nature great to look at, but there are health benefits to being connected to the outdoors. Did you know that being outdoors can help lower stress, lower depression and increase general feelings of well-being?

Stress

Every person has a different way of handling stress. If you are feeling stressed it is likely you are feeling it both mentally and physically. Constant stress can really put a toll on the body — headaches and muscle stiffness, just to name a few. There have been many studies showing that when people are outdoors, in a place with trees or green space, those individuals feel as though their stress levels are lower.

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One study even found that when there is a view of trees from their office, those people have greater job satisfaction. Do you see enough green space in your day?

Depression

Some studies show that being outdoors in a green space can reduce depression, even if only for short periods of time. This research shows that people will experience better mental health if they live close to parks or other green spaces. Even a lot of trees can help. Just as living with trees helps, living without trees has a harmful effect on mental health.

General health

Being outside in a nature-filled area has more health benefits than classic urban settings. When people have access to green spaces, they are more likely to be active and enjoy the space. Being active outside in those areas has shown to lower blood

pressure, decrease risk for heart disease, increase self-esteem and improve a person's general mood when compared to a person who only exercises indoors.

The next time you have a chance, take your exercise outside and enjoy the fresh air. You will get many benefits for your efforts, including reducing stress, reducing depression, and improving your general health.

SOURCES:

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