

# PLAN FOR HEALTH

## The Great Outdoors

JUNE 2023



**June is Great Outdoors Month, a month-long celebration encouraging everyone to head outside into the natural world.**

There's no doubt many of us feel refreshed after a little clean air and sunshine. However, we know with advances in technology and electronics, we may not be getting outside as much as when we were younger. Remember the days of red light-green light, freeze tag, kickball, and hide and seek? Active time outside as a kid, and adult, can benefit your health and well-being. Here are some of those benefits of being outdoors below:

- Boosts life satisfaction.
- Elevates vitamin D levels.
- May lower blood pressure.
- Can reduce inflammation.
- Improves sleep.
- Can increase happiness.
- Outdoor activities burn more calories.
- Nature relieves stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Increases social interaction.
- Generates creativity.

## ALLERGIES AND OUTDOOR EXERCISE

There are plenty of outdoor activities that provide great exercise such as hiking, biking, swimming, gardening, and many more. But for those who suffer from seasonal allergies, these activities may not be as appealing, as they may come with sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose, and wheezing. Fortunately, there are ways to decrease the severity of symptoms and enjoy the time outdoors. Below are some helpful tips and facts.

- Avoid exercise that involves a high degree of movement on days the pollen count is high. Exercises such as running, jogging, biking, or team ball sports can be replaced by yoga, swimming, stretching or weight training.

- Avoid working out when pollen concentrations are usually the highest, between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. Also, be aware that pollen counts are highest on warm, dry, and breezy mornings and lowest on rainy, cooler days.
- Although exercising outdoors increases your contact with pollen, the allergic response may not happen right away. It could take up to an hour for your worst symptoms to occur. Because of this, be sure to take a shower, wash your hair, and put on clean clothes immediately after exercising or participating in outdoor activities.
- Don't forget the help of allergy medications to make your outdoor activities more enjoyable.

## MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR

As mentioned before, advances in technology have decreased children's time outdoors. In fact, American youth spend 35% less time playing outside compared to their parents when they were kids.

It's sometimes easier to allow a few more minutes of screen time, than to supervise outdoor time, but the benefits outweigh the short-term inconvenience. It's important to model the behavior you want to encourage in your children and show them how outdoor play is part of a healthy lifestyle. Boost your family's physical activity and outside time by getting everyone involved. When you find activities that everyone can enjoy, it's much easier to get off the couch and away from the screens. Below are some tips on how to get started.

- Set limits on screen time.
- Make new routines. Plan to take a family walk or bike ride after dinner each day.
- Encourage outdoor play with fun active toys like bubbles, balls, chalk, jump ropes, squirt guns, sprinklers, and bikes.
- Get everyone involved in games like tag, catch, or capture the flag.
- Plan active outings. Head to a park, pool or splash pad, or miniature golf.
- Make it a competition. Use fitness trackers and see who can take the most steps.
- Be flexible. If a conflict comes up, reschedule your outdoor activity time instead of canceling it.

## Sharecare Featured Challenge: Find Time for Fitness Challenge

Join the Find Time for Fitness Challenge this June. Track for 21 days that you completed a 30 minute daily workout throughout June to complete the challenge!

Join the challenge by going to [mycare.sharecare.com](https://mycare.sharecare.com), clicking **Achieve** → **Challenges** → **Upcoming** → **Find Time for Fitness beginning on 5/25**.



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Summertime Safety**