

# Health Tips



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## Introducing Walking into Your Daily Life

Walking is especially good for your brain, because it increases blood circulation and the oxygen and glucose that reach your brain. Walking is not strenuous, so your leg muscles don't take up extra oxygen and glucose like they do during other forms of exercise. As you walk, you effectively oxygenate your brain. Maybe this is why walking can "clear your head" and helps you to think better.

Movement and exercise increase breathing and heart rate so that more blood flows to the brain, enhancing energy production and waste removal. Studies show that in response to exercise, cerebral blood vessels can grow, even in middle-aged sedentary animals. Some is better than none, so even a few minutes extra each day can make a difference. Get moving!

## Tips for Healthier Travel

As many travelers escape for a winter holiday, we offer some helpful tips. Advance planning and a few precautions can make your adventure more enjoyable.

### Travel tip #1: Drink and eat often – Do

not wait until you are feeling thirsty to start replacing these fluids. Since your body can only absorb 1 quart of fluid per hour, drink .5 to 1 quart of water every hour. Carry your water bottle in your hand and drink small amounts often.

**Travel tip #2: Stay wet and stay cool** – Whenever you are near water, make sure that you wet yourself down. This will make a wonderful difference in how well you feel.

**Travel tip #3: Limit your time in the sun** – Limit your time in the sun, especially when you first arrive, and use sun block. Try and take a break between 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. to avoid the worst heat of the day.

**Travel tip #4: Don't forget your medication** – If you are on a prescription take enough medication with you on your trip. Remember to carry a doctor's certificate for any prescribed drugs, and to keep medicines in their original labeled containers.

**Travel tip #5: Out-of-country coverage** – Check your medical coverage to ensure you and all your eligible dependents are covered for out-of-country emergencies, and bring your travel card with you.

**Travel tip #6: Vaccinations** – Depending on where you plan on traveling, you may need to be vaccinated. Check with your physician 2 – 3 months prior to traveling.

*Have a safe and enjoyable trip.*

## Laughter is Still the Best Medicine

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, a recent study supports the old saying – laughter is the best medicine. It found that hearty laughs helped heart patients prevent another attack. Only 10% of those in the study who laughed 30 minutes each day suffered another attack, while 30% of those in the study who did not laugh had another attack.

The high risk of a second attack comes from high blood pressure and stress, according to study experts. They also noted that when patients spend 30 minutes each day laughing at funny videos or comedy routines, stress hormones in the blood dropped by as much as 50%.

## Dehydration

Do you wait until you are thirsty before drinking water? Thirst isn't an early signal of water needs; it's a warning sign that you're dehydrated and need to drink up and fast. By the time you feel thirsty you have already lost over 1% of your total body water.

Subtle signs of dehydration include dry lips, muscle or joint soreness, headaches, crankiness, fatigue and constipation.

Drinking water before you feel thirsty is an important part of maintaining proper hydration, which is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. It allows your body to eliminate toxins and waste products.

Milk, juice and soup also count toward your daily fluid intake because of their high water content. Avoid alcohol, coffee, tea and soft drinks that contain caffeine as they may have a mild diuretic effect – caffeine can hold back water from the tissues that need it.