

Healthy Sun-Bathing Tips!

- **Avoid getting burned.** Repeated sunburns, especially in children and very fair-skinned people, are linked to skin cancers. Most people should be okay with regular, small amounts of sun exposure.
- **Prepare your skin and buildup tolerance gradually.** Start early in the year (spring), or early in the morning before the sun is strongest and slowly build up the amount of time you spend in the sun. After building a tolerance, aim for short exposures (15 to 30 minutes) either in the early part of the day, or, if your vitamin D is low and you do not burn easily, at mid-day. Middle of the day exposure maximizes vitamin D production. Significant vitamin D production occurs when your shadow is shorter than you are. If you have had skin cancer, ask your provider about modifying these suggestions.
- **Aim for 15 to 30 minutes of unprotected sun exposure two to four times a week.** To reap the maximum benefits, expose as much of your skin as you can, not just your arms and face.
- **After your 15 to 30 minutes of sun or if your skin begins to redden, protect your skin immediately.** Wear a hat and light colored clothing that blocks the sun and keeps you cool. Apply sunscreens as needed. Remember that even weak sunscreens block the ability of your skin to manufacture vitamin D, so once you have applied it, you will not be making vitamin D.
- **Boost your “internal sunscreen” by consuming antioxidant foods and beneficial fats.** These foods strengthen skin cells, helping to protect them from sun damage. On a regular basis eating several servings of vegetables and fruits such as blueberries, raspberries, goji berries, and pomegranates, and supplementing with green powdered mixes (wheat grass, barley grass, seaweed powders, etc.) and fish oils are great options when going into the sun.
- **Talk with your primary care physician about whether you should have your vitamin D blood levels checked and whether you should take a vitamin D supplement.** The current normal range for vitamin D is 20 to 55 ng/ml, however your medical provider may want you to achieve higher levels closer to 50 to 75 ng/ml. At your next visit, talk with your provider about what is best for you.

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This is a free service offered at specific times during the week. Currently, **Virtual Forum is hosted on Thursdays from 12:30 to 1:00 p.m.**

These forums are available to both Kaiser Permanente members and non-members.

How do you get started? Go to positivechoice.org, click on the Virtual Nutrition/Fitness tab on the top of the page and follow the instructions. Or scan this QR code and your smart device will take you directly to the site.

