

to your

# Health!

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## Staying Hydrated

*Roshan Luke, RD; VA Palo Alto Health Care System*

As the weather gets warmer the need to stay well hydrated becomes more important. Every year many people are taken to the hospital due to not staying hydrated. Everyone is at risk for dehydration, but those at most risks are:

- Infants and children
- Older people
- People with chronic illness
- Endurance athletes
- People living at high altitudes
- People working or exercising outside in hot humid weather



See **Staying Hydrated** – page 4



## Traveling with Medication

*Vincent Cheng, PharmD; Pharmacy Resident; VA Palo Alto Health Care System*

Summer is here and it is a great time to go on vacation or visit some family and friends. If you have a medical condition which requires regular doses of medications, you will need to bring your prescriptions along with you.

Here are some general tips for traveling with medications to lessen possible problems while away:

### Plan Ahead

- Bring a list of all your current medications and instructions.
- Make sure you have enough medication. Double check how often you take a medication each day and make sure you have enough for the days you are away. Pack extra doses in case of delays or if you accidently drop a pill.
- Don't wait to the last minute to refill your medications. Some drugs could take up to a week to arrive after you request a refill.
- If you are traveling out of the country, check with the American Embassy or Consulate to make sure that your medicines will be allowed into the country you are visiting. Some countries do not let visitors bring certain medicines into the country.
- It may be a good idea to have your prescribing provider write a note on VA stationery for controlled substances and injectable medications.



See **Traveling with Medication** – page 4

# Be Food Safe!

*Eileen Stein, MS, RD; Clinical Nutrition Manager; VA Palo Alto Health Care System*



Even though no one likes to get sick, sometimes you can't avoid it. However, when it comes to food-borne illness, following a few simple steps can help limit your risk of causing yourself or your loved ones to become ill.

## Step 1: Clean

- The simplest thing anyone can do to limit the risk of food borne illness is to keep everything clean. Wash your hands with warm water and soap frequently when handling any food.
- Wash your cutting board and knives with warm to hot, soapy water after each food item.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water. It is a good idea to rinse all produce, even the ones where you don't eat the skin (like melons and citrus fruits).
- Wash and sanitize counter tops and appliances frequently.
- Clean out your refrigerator regularly. Most leftovers should be used or discarded after 3 to 5 days. If you know you won't eat leftovers before then, consider freezing them.

## Step 2: Separate

- Once you have cleaned everything, don't cross-contaminate! Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs away from fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator.
- Use one cutting board for raw meat or poultry and another one for produce. Consider getting colored cutting boards to make keeping things separated easier.
- Do not put cooked food on a cutting board or platter that previously had raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

## Step 3: Cook

- Make sure to cook foods to a safe temperature. Don't guess if the temperature is correct, use a thermometer.
  - Beef, pork, lamb, and fin fish should be cooked to a minimum of 145°F (and then rested for 3 minutes after removing from the heat).
  - Ground meat should be cooked to 160°F.
  - Poultry should be cooked to 165°F.
  - Eggs and egg dishes should be cooked to 160°F (both the yolk and white should not be runny).
  - Leftovers and casseroles should be heated to 165°F.

## Step 4: Chill

- Remember the danger zone – bacteria love to grow between 40°F and 140°F. Keep your cold foods below 40°F and your hot foods above 140°F.
- Do not let raw meat, poultry, eggs, or cooked foods sit at room temperature for more than one hour. If you are having a picnic or barbecue, put cold foods on ice.
- Always defrost foods in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Don't leave foods to defrost on the counter or at room temperature.
- Divide leftovers into shallow containers and put them in the refrigerator promptly.

Some people are at higher risk for developing food borne illness, especially young children, older adults, and those with decreased immune systems. However, by following the four principles of Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill, you can reduce the risk for getting sick for everyone.

*To get more information about food safety, visit the Fight Bac website: [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)*

## Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions or topics you would like addressed in the [To Your Health](#) newsletter, feel free to contact

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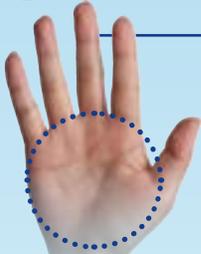
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# The secret to serving size is in your hand

## A fist or cupped hand = 1 cup

1 serving =  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cereal, cooked pasta or rice  
or 1 cup of raw, leafy green vegetables  
or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cooked or raw, chopped vegetables or fruit.



## Palm = 3 oz. of meat

Two servings, or 6 oz., of lean meat (poultry, fish, shellfish, beef) should be a part of a daily diet. Measure the right amount with your palm. One palm size portion equals 3 oz. or one serving.



## A thumb = 1 oz. of cheese

Consuming low-fat cheese is a good way to help you meet the required servings from the milk, yogurt and cheese group.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  - 2 oz. of low-fat cheese counts as 1 of the 2-3 daily recommended servings.

## Thumb tip = 1 teaspoon

Keep high-fat foods, such as peanut butter and mayonnaise, at a minimum by measuring the serving with your thumb. One teaspoon is equal to the end of your thumb, from the knuckle up. Three teaspoons equals 1 tablespoon.



## Handful = 1-2 oz. of snack food

Snacking can add up. Remember, 1 handful equals 1 oz. of nuts and small candies. For chips and pretzels, 1 handful equals 1 oz.

## 1 tennis ball = 1 serving of fruit

Healthy diets include 2-4 servings of fruit a day.



### Airplane Travel

- Pack your prescription medications in your carry-on luggage.
- Take your medications in their original container clearly labeled with your name. Pillboxes can be filled once you arrive at your destination.
- Arrive at the airport slightly earlier than you otherwise would. An agent must examine your medications and this may take some extra time.
- Medications in liquid and gel form are allowed to bypass the 3oz limit as long as they are screened.

### Lost or Stolen Medications

- If you are traveling within the States and you somehow run out of medications, you can contact your original pharmacy and request that a supply be mailed to your temporary address if possible. Otherwise, you can register yourself at a local VA pharmacy and request a short-term supply there. However, certain medications such as controlled substances may not be provided without visiting a local provider.

By thinking ahead and packing smart, you can stay healthy and enjoy your time. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/pack-smart> for more traveling tips.



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## Staying Hydrated – continued from page 1

The good news is that there are signs you can look for that will let you know if you are becoming dehydrated. Some of the signs are:

- Dry and sticky mouth
- Feeling of being sleepy or tired
- Thirst
- Very yellow urine
- Dry skin
- Headaches
- Constipation
- Muscle cramps
- Dizziness or being light headed
- Low blood pressure

You can be dehydrated even if you do not have one of these signs. Thus, it is important to make sure you are drinking water or other beverages at different times during the day. Dehydration can lead to big problems like:

- Swelling of the brain
- Seizures
- Low blood volume
- Kidney failure
- Coma
- Death

The best way to prevent these problems is to make sure to drink plenty of water or other fluids during the day. It is recommended that men drink 3 liters or 13 cups and women should drink 2.2 liters or 9 cups per day (unless otherwise directed by your provider). The numbers are average so some people will need to drink more and others a little less. If you are having diarrhea, vomiting, running a fever, staying in a hot humid place, or planning to do lots of exercise you will need to drink more fluid.

If you don't like water you can drink other beverages. Some suggestions are:

- Soups, herbal teas, or decaffeinated coffee
- Jell-O or other sugar free gelatin
- Low calorie beverages such as Crystal Light

- Sports drinks that have electrolytes when exercising
- Change the form or flavor of the water or beverage.
- Try freezing the water or adding some flavor. Examples of this are ice, smoothies, and shakes.
- 100% fruit juices

Now that you know how important staying hydrated is to your wellbeing, what's stopping you from drinking enough liquid during the day? If the answer is time, forgetfulness, or lack of thirst then here are a few simple suggestions:

- Set an alarm. This way you get a reminder every 2 hours.
- Keep a bottle or container with water or some other beverage with you at all times. You should be refilling the bottle or container a few times a day.
- Drink 1-2 cups of fluid between each meal.
- Put your favorite tea or juice in the bottle.

Lastly, waiting until you're thirsty or feeling dehydrated is never a good plan. Dehydration is one problem that you need to keep a good handle on and in turn will improve your health.



## Fruit Skewers With Yogurt Dip

This tangy fruit and sweet yogurt snack makes a perfect taste combination for a hot summer day

### Ingredients

- 1 C strawberries, rinsed, stems removed, and cut in half
- 1 C fresh pineapple, diced (or canned pineapple chunks in juice, drained)
- ½ C blackberries
- 1 tangerine or Clementine, peeled and cut into 8 segments
- 8 6-inch wooden skewers



### For dip:

- 1 C strawberries, rinsed, stems removed, and cut in half
- ¼ C fat-free plain yogurt
- ⅛ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp honey

### Directions

1. Thread two strawberry halves, two pineapple chunks, two blackberries, and one tangerine segment on each skewer.
2. To prepare the dip, puree strawberries in a blender or food processor. Add yogurt, vanilla, and honey, and mix well.
3. Serve two skewers with yogurt dip on the side.

Prep time: 15 minutes

**Cook time: 0 minutes**

**Yield: 4 servings**

**Serving size: 2 skewers,  
1½ Tbsp dip**

**Each serving provides:**

Calories	71
Total fat	0 g
Saturated fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	10 mg



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Palo Alto, CA 94304  
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## VA MODESTO OPC

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Modesto, CA 95355  
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## VA STOCKTON OPC

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[www.paloalto.va.gov](http://www.paloalto.va.gov)

To access past issues of the To Your Health newsletter, please visit [www.paloalto.va.gov/To\\_Your\\_Health.asp](http://www.paloalto.va.gov/To_Your_Health.asp).

You can also access the Veterans Health Library (VHL) by going to [www.veteranshealthlibrary.org](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org) or on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).



 VA Palo Alto Health Care System Division

 VA Palo Alto Health Care System Community Based Outpatient Clinic

## Get Smart:

# Know When Antibiotics Work

## Tips for Healthy Living



- Antibiotics fight infections caused by:
  - Viruses
  - Bacteria
  - Viruses and Bacteria
- Bacteria are germs that cause colds and flu.
  - True
  - False
- Which of these illnesses should be treated with antibiotics?
  - Runny Nose
  - The Flu
  - Cold
  - Strep Throat
- Bacteria that cause infections can become resistant to antibiotics.
  - True
  - False
- Alexander Fleming discovered the first antibiotic in 1928. What was the antibiotic named?
  - Mold
  - Penicillin
  - Vancomycin
  - Doxycycline

Answers: (1) Bacteria, (2) False, (3) Strep Throat, (4) True, (5) Penicillin

<http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/resources/quiz.html>

