

The Benefits of Getting Outdoors

Summer is almost here, and with it come seasonal barbecues, yard work and outdoor events. And the scientific evidence is growing in favor of getting out into the woods or mountains, the center of town or even your own back yard.

Getting outdoors can be one of the healthiest things you do for both your body and your brain, according to many studies. While, many of the benefits are common knowledge, some of the results may surprise you.

VITAMIN D: “THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN”

Statistics show we do not get enough of the “sunshine vitamin,” not only because of long periods indoors, but because Vitamin D doesn’t occur naturally in many foods. Unlike other vitamins, Vitamin D has many disease-fighting properties, protecting against everything from osteoporosis and depression to Alzheimer’s disease, cancer, heart attacks and strokes. The good news is that moderate, controlled time in the sun for short periods of time can give you all the Vitamin D you need.

CLEANER AIR

Studies have found the concentration of some pollutants is significantly higher indoors – sometimes 100 times higher or more – than it is outdoors. Whether it’s carbon monoxide and particles from things like fireplaces, cooking appliances,

chemicals in your hair spray or household cleaning supplies, indoor pollution makes it all the more critical that you get outside often.

STRESS REDUCTION AND BETTER SLEEP

Walking outdoors is a proven stress reducer, which leads naturally to more restful and effective sleep. With extensive research on this, much of the science shows that walking in the woods or in scenic natural environments is more effective at stress reduction, while any exercise (including walking) contributes to deeper, better sleeping.

AND THE LIST GOES ON

Being outdoors has proven to have many other positive health effects, including:

- Increased brain function
- Weight loss
- More creativity
- Better mobility and dexterity

Getting outdoors often is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Talk to your doctor about any necessary precautions or limitations you may have, and always look for opportunities to get outside more. And if you have questions about a medical condition that’s keeping you inside or any other condition, Best Doctors can help.