

# Live Well, Work Well

Quarterly  
Newsletter



## White House Commission Releases Initial Chronic Disease Report

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# White House Commission Releases Initial Chronic Disease Report

The White House's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission recently released its first major report on chronic disease in the country. The commission comprises around 14 officials from various federal agencies and is chaired by the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. An earlier executive order by President Donald Trump established the MAHA Commission to address life expectancy and chronic disease. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 40% of the roughly 73 million children in the United States have at least one chronic health condition, such as asthma, allergies, obesity, autoimmune diseases and behavioral disorders.

The report, titled "[Make Our Children Healthy Again: Assessment](#)," explored how technology, health and agriculture innovations have driven economic growth but also introduced health threats. Overall, the report attributed many chronic diseases to the following potential drivers:

- **Ultra-processed foods (UPFs)**—Nearly 70% of children's calories come from UPFs, which are high in added sugars, chemical additives and saturated fats.
- **Environmental chemicals**—Children are increasingly exposed to synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides, microplastics and dioxins.
- **Sedentary, technology-driven lifestyle**—Children are experiencing high levels of inactivity, screen use, sleep deprivation and

chronic stress. Teens average nine hours of nonschool screen time each day, and 85% of teens didn't meet the 2024 federal minimum daily activity recommendation.

- **Medical overuse**—There are concerns about overprescribing medications, including antidepressants, ADHD medicines, asthma medications and glucagon-like peptide-1 (or GLP-1) drugs, to children.

The report also suggested that childhood vaccine schedules and clinical trial practices should be studied further.

## What's Next?

The initial findings of this report already faced industry pushback. For example, analysts have warned that policies affecting pesticides could undermine public trust in food safety and have an adverse impact on farming and agriculture. Future changes in public health policy are likely to face opposition.

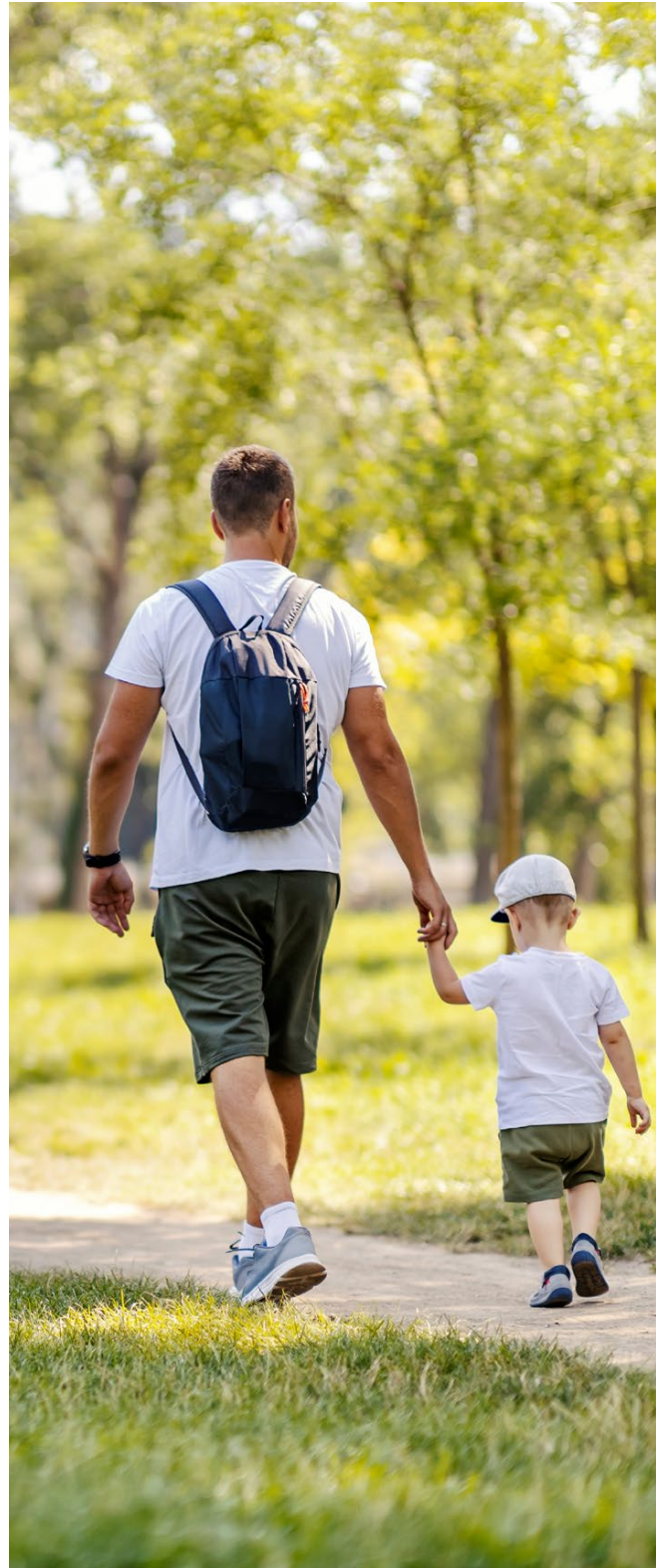
Initially, the report didn't clearly outline changes in policy, such as the cost of addressing chronic illnesses and related action steps, or include a budget. However, it does outline next steps, including research initiatives and potential uses of technology. Kennedy shared that the MAHA Commission will develop a roadmap and policy recommendations, and the strategy is due in August 2025. Stay tuned for further findings.

# Brisk Walking Linked to Lower Risks of Heart Rhythm Abnormalities

A new study published by BMJ Heart, a journal about advances in cardiovascular disease, found that an average or brisk walking pace was associated with a 35%-43% lower risk of heart rhythm abnormalities compared to a slower walking pace. According to the study, a slow pace is less than 3 mph, and a brisk pace is more than 4 mph. Higher walking speeds were also associated with lower risks of atrial fibrillation and other cardiac arrhythmia. The most common forms of arrhythmia can be characterized by irregular heartbeats, fatigue, dizziness, lightheadedness, shortness of breath, chest discomfort or fainting. It's important to be aware of these symptoms and contact your health provider if you have concerns about your heart health.

This BMJ Heart study also reinforces the findings of other health experts, highlighting that walking can provide substantial health benefits. Walking can also boost your mood, improve cholesterol levels, reduce blood pressure, support joints, strengthen muscles and build bone mass. Walking is a feasible exercise to add to your weekly routine. It doesn't cost money or require any equipment. It can even be as simple as choosing to walk to your destination instead of driving.

You can implement walking into your life by creating small daily goals, finding a walking path you enjoy, and using music or other audio as motivation. To learn more about creating a physical activity routine, talk to your primary care provider and discuss what works best for you.



# FDA to Review Nutritional Quality of Infant Formula

On May 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced plans to review the nutrition quality of infant formula sold in the United States, a review that's the first of its kind in over 30 years. This effort, part of the broader "Operation Stork Speed" initiative, aims to ensure that formulas meet the latest scientific standards for infant health and development.

"Every child deserves a healthy start," said HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., whose agency oversees the FDA. "By taking a hard, honest look at the nutrients in infant formula, we're ensuring that parents have the tools to give their children the best nutrition from the very beginning."

The FDA's review includes a public request for information, which invites scientists, health care professionals and caregivers to weigh in on whether current nutrient levels should be updated. The agency is also considering adding new nutrients and increasing testing for contaminants like heavy metals. The FDA currently specifies 30 nutrients that must be included in infant formulas, along with their minimum and max-

imum amounts. Among the nutrients currently required are protein and fat, vitamins A, D, E and K, folic acid, iron, magnesium and zinc. Currently, the HHS secretary reviews the table of required nutrients every four years as appropriate.

## What Caregivers Should Know

This new initiative may concern some parents and caregivers, especially with the baby formula shortage following a voluntary recall of one of the country's top formula producers three years ago. However, it's important to know that there are no immediate changes, and current formulas remain safe and regulated. Experts note that this review is not a red flag that infant formula is dangerous, nor will it bring about dramatic changes. The FDA review is simply a proactive step, not a recall.

The FDA is accepting information from the public up until Sept. 11; however, at this moment, it's unknown how long the nutrient review could take. In the meantime, parents and caregivers are encouraged to stay informed and consult their pediatricians with any concerns.





### July: UV Safety Awareness Month

Sun safety is a year-round responsibility, but it's especially important during the sunny summer months. Sun damage can lead to more than just a painful sunburn. Extensive exposure to ultra-violet (UV) rays emitted from the sun can result in serious health concerns, such as skin cancer. Furthermore, prolonged sun exposure can harm your eyes, leading to conditions such as cataracts, macular degeneration and even ocular melanoma.

July is UV Safety Awareness Month, so take steps to protect your skin and eyes when enjoying the outdoors. To protect yourself from UV rays, consider staying in the shade during the sun's peak hours, wearing protective clothing and sunglasses, and applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30.

Check out [aad.org](http://aad.org) to learn more about the risks of UV exposure and how you can best protect yourself.

### August: National Immunization Awareness Month

Immunizations help save countless lives each year. A vaccine encourages your body to produce antibodies—special agents of the immune system that attack harmful elements, like viruses. These antibodies quickly learn how to fight off a particular disease, like the flu or COVID-19. This can be critical if you're ever exposed to such illnesses.

Since August is National Immunization Awareness Month, double-check that you're up to date on all recommended vaccines. Delaying critical vaccinations can lead to serious health risks; that's why there are recommended immunization schedules.

Visit the [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov) to learn more about immunization schedules.

### September: National Food Safety Education Month

The CDC estimates that roughly 1 in 6 Americans get sick from eating contaminated food every year. There are ways to help prevent you and others from getting sick from a foodborne illness, and it starts with focusing on simple food poisoning prevention steps.

September is National Food Safety Education Month, so take measures to prevent food poisoning. The four core practices for food safety are cleaning hands and surfaces frequently, avoiding cross-contamination of meats and vegetables, cooking food to safe internal temperatures and refrigerating foods quickly to slow the growth of harmful bacteria.

Visit [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov) for additional information on food safety practices.

### Looking Ahead

**October:** National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**November:** American Diabetes Month

**December:** Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness Month

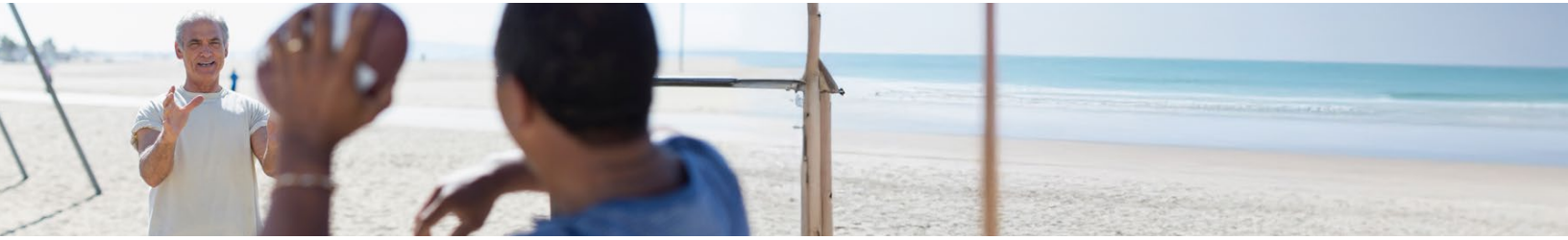
# 10 Ways to Ease Summertime Stressors

While summer is often seen as a time for relaxation and fun, it can also bring unique stressors that disrupt routines and impact mental health. Common summertime stressors include routine disruptions, habit changes (e.g., sleep, eating and activity), social obligations, financial pressures, extreme weather changes (e.g., heat, humidity and daylight) and body image concerns. Understanding these stressors and how to combat them is essential for enjoying the season to its fullest.

To help you enjoy the season to the fullest and manage your mental well-being, here are 10 practical tips to ease summertime stress:

1. **Identify your triggers.** Understanding what triggers your anxiety or stress is the first step toward managing it.
2. **Prioritize outdoor time.** Make the most of the longer days and warmer weather by spending time outdoors. This can reduce stress levels, improve mood and support cognitive function.
3. **Maintain a routine.** Keeping a consistent daily routine can help stabilize your mood and reduce stress. Focus on establishing regular sleep patterns, balancing your diet, and scheduling downtime and relaxation.
4. **Stay hydrated and cool.** Heat can exacerbate stress and anxiety. Combat this by drinking plenty of water, seeking air-conditioned environments, and wearing light, breathable clothing.
5. **Plan and budget wisely.** To avoid last-minute stress, consider setting a budget for summer activities, exploring low-cost or free activities, or planning financially for vacations.
6. **Practice mindfulness.** Try incorporating meditation, breathing exercises or yoga into your daily routine. These techniques can help calm your mind and reduce stress.
7. **Stay connected with loved ones.** Social support can provide a sense of belonging and help alleviate feelings of stress and isolation, so maintain connections with family and friends.
8. **Get adequate rest.** Ensure you are getting enough sleep each night. Aim for seven to nine hours of quality sleep to help your body recover and manage stress more effectively.
9. **Engage in physical activity.** Regular physical activity, such as a walk, workout session or sport, can help reduce stress, improve mood and boost overall health.
10. **Set realistic expectations.** Be mindful of setting realistic expectations for summer activities and responsibilities. Avoid overcommitting yourself and allow time for relaxation and enjoyment.

By incorporating these tips into your summer routine, you can better manage stress and enhance your overall well-being, ensuring a more enjoyable and balanced season. Contact a trained health care provider if you need additional help managing stress.



# Beat the Summer Heat

Summer heat can be more than uncomfortable; it can threaten your health, especially for older adults and children. Hot and humid weather can make it more challenging for your body to cool down, leading to heat-related illnesses. If left untreated, heat-related illnesses can become life-threatening. In fact, heat-related deaths have been on the rise in the United States in recent years.

Exposure to abnormal or prolonged heat and humidity without relief or adequate fluids can cause various heat-related illnesses. Here are some common types of illnesses to keep an eye out for this summer:

- **Heat cramps** are a mild form of heat illness consisting of painful muscle cramps and spasms. These occur during or after intense exercise and sweating in high heat, so moving to a cool place to rest and stretch cramped muscles is important.
- **Heat exhaustion** occurs when a person cannot sweat enough to cool the body, usually due to not drinking enough fluids during hot weather. A person suffering from heat exhaustion must move to a cool place and drink plenty of water.
- **Heatstroke** occurs when your body temperature reaches 104 degrees Fahrenheit

or higher within minutes. The person may also become confused or lose consciousness. The condition is the result of untreated heat exhaustion and a serious medical emergency that must be treated quickly by a professional.

Don't let the summer heat get the best of you. Consider these tips to prevent heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of fluids, but avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages (e.g., coffee, tea and soda) that can lead to dehydration.
- Eat light, refreshing foods.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Apply sunscreen and wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- Do chores or other outdoor activities in the morning or evening.
- Stay indoors as much as possible, or take breaks from being outside.

Practicing these tips can help you beat the heat. Contact a doctor if heat-related symptoms don't improve within an hour and seek immediate medical attention if the person has heatstroke.

## 6 Sun Safety Tips

Any suntan is a result of damage caused by exposure to UV radiation from the sun. Other types of sun damage include wrinkles, age spots, freckles, tough or leathery skin, dilated blood vessels, sunburn and skin cancer.

The sun emits two types of UV radiation: UVA (which causes aging) and UVB (which causes burning). Both UVA and UVB rays can cause skin cancer and are undetectable to a person sitting in the sun—you cannot feel them on your skin. They also are damaging on both cloudy and sunny days. In fact, up to 80% of the sun's UV rays can get through the clouds on an overcast day.

Sun safety is always in season, so consider these six tips for protecting your skin from sun damage:

1. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least 30 SPF daily, regardless of the weather.
2. Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the rays are the most intense.
3. Wear protective clothing with tightly woven fabric covering your arms and legs.
4. Wear a wide-brimmed hat that shades your face, neck and ears.
5. Wear sunglasses with 100% UV protection.
6. Stay in the shade as much as you can, avoiding the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Avoiding excessive sun exposure and sunburn is the best way to protect yourself from sun damage and skin cancer. Routinely inspect your skin for any changes, and if you suspect that a spot on your skin is new or has changed color or appearance, see a doctor.





Try out these two healthy recipes from the USDA's MyPlate Kitchen website.

# Blueberry Muffins

Makes: **12 servings**

## Ingredients

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup low-fat milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen)

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F.
2. Grease the muffin pans.
3. In a large mixing bowl, stir the oil and sugar until creamy.
4. Add the eggs, milk and vanilla. Mix until blended.
5. In a medium mixing bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder and salt.
6. Add the flour mix to the oil and sugar in the large bowl. Stir together.
7. Stir the blueberries into the batter.
8. Fill each muffin cup 2/3 full with batter.
9. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes.

## Nutritional Information (per serving)

Calories	252
Total fat	10 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Cholesterol	32 mg
Sodium	195 mg
Carbohydrate	37 g
Dietary fiber	1 g
Total sugars	20 g
Added sugars included	16 g
Protein	4 g
Vitamin D	0 mcg
Calcium	67 mg
Iron	1 mg
Potassium	69 mg

# Tomato Basil Bruschetta

Makes: 12 servings

## Ingredients

- 8 Roma plum tomatoes (chopped)
- 2 garlic cloves (minced)
- ½ large onion (chopped)
- 6 basil leaves
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Salt (optional, to taste)
- Black pepper (optional, to taste)
- 2 French bread baguettes (cut into ½-inch diagonal slices)

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
2. Combine the tomatoes, garlic, onion, basil and olive oil in a bowl. Optional: Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Set aside.
3. Arrange the bread on a baking sheet in a single layer. Bake for about 5 to 7 minutes until it begins to brown slightly.
4. Remove the bread from the oven and transfer it to a serving platter.
5. Serve the tomato mixture in a bowl with a serving spoon and let everyone help themselves. You can also place some on each slice of bread before serving. If you add the tomato mixture yourself, do so at the last minute, or the bread may become soggy.

## Nutritional Information (per serving)

Calories	103
Total fat	3 g
Saturated fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	132 mg
Carbohydrate	17 g
Dietary fiber	1 g
Total sugars	2 g
Added sugars included	0 g
Protein	3 g
Vitamin D	0 mcg
Calcium	18 mg
Iron	1 mg
Potassium	140 mg