

SPRING HEALTH

It's spring and we want to get out, do things and enjoy the sun! What is important for spring health?

What health issues are around in spring?

- Hayfever – Spring is hayfever season! If you're prone to hayfever, early spring is a good time to start preparing for the hayfever season such as cutting back weeds and grass.
- Asthma - Asthma season is just around the corner so if you're prone to it, now is the time to check your medications to make sure they're all in date.
- Aches and pain – one of the most common causes of aches and pains is getting cold. The times people tend to get cold is when they've been out in a cold wind or in bed at night. It happens quickly: it's not too cold when you get out or to bed but then a few hours later you're freezing. It's hard, but important, to stay warm when there may be big changes in temperature.
- Spring colds – These are common and often happen when we don't dress warmly enough or the weather suddenly and unexpectedly changes. In the early part of spring, it's a good idea to keep a jacket handy even if you don't think you'll need it.
- Sunburn – Don't forget the sunscreen when you're outside! Sunburn can creep up very quickly on warm spring days!

What about spring cleaning?

- We often associate spring with a big clean out. This is a great idea – on a warm day open the doors and windows to get the fresh air through the house. Give everything a good clean – even those hard to get at places like ceiling fan blades – it gets rid of the dust and any mould. This not only makes you feel brighter, it also gets rid of anything that may start to grow into something more toxic in the humid summer months.
- Also, check your medicine cabinet. Get rid of anything that is past its use-by date or looks like it's changed colour. If you have old medication that you need to get rid of talk to your pharmacist about its disposal – most medications shouldn't be flushed down the sink as they can contaminate our water ways.

What should we eat in spring?

- The start of spring is still cool or even cold so warm foods are best but you are probably looking at lighter foods than in winter. Good ideas are stews, vegetable bakes, frittatas and risotto.
- As the weather warms up, add cooler foods such as salad side dishes and fruit yoghurt.
- Fresh food that's in season is always the best, most nutritious food. For spring, the fruit in season is: berries, strawberries and lemons. Some of the vegetables in season are: beans, peas, broccoli, parsnip, cucumber, squash, spinach and zucchini.

What about exercising in spring?

- As you start to feel more energised, it's great to step up your exercise or even start a new activity. Look to do something outside – walking, cycling or joining an outside yoga class.
- In the early days of spring it's important to stay warm while exercising – especially if the wind is brisk. Layers are a great option – take them off as you warm up while exercising and put them back on as you cool down.

What else is important?

- Vitamin D - Often when the warmer weather starts people stop taking Vitamin D. In the early part of spring, we aren't getting enough sun to make too much ourselves so keep the supplement going.