

Health Promotion & Wellness

July/August 2020

July is Summer Safety Month

This summer certainly has a few added challenges when it comes to being safe. Most recreational facilities are closed and many people are staying home to avoid this deadly virus. Getting outside is still important for good mental and physical health. The typical hazards to consider are:

- Avoid sunburns.
- Stay hydrated.
- Pay attention to the environment.
- Learn or review safety measures for any adventure before you get started – mountain climbing, kayaking, open water swimming, diving, etc.
- Be sure children are taught these same safety measures and are appropriately supplied and supervised when enjoying these fun activities.
- Drink alcohol responsibly.
- Keep correct safety in mind for all passengers in all vehicles.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends the following when you venture outside to play in this time of pandemic:

- Visit places that are close to your home.
- Check with the park or recreation area in advance to prepare safely and to find out if the bathroom facilities are open and what services are available.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others you don't live with (social distancing) and do all you can to prevent exposure to COVID-19.
- Carefully consider use of playgrounds and help children follow guidelines.
- Play it safe around and in swimming pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds by keeping space between yourself and others.
- Avoid going out if you are sick or tested positive for the virus.
- Avoid crowds.

We hope you still enjoy your summer!

Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html>

<https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/hp-toolbox-july.aspx>



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August is Prevention Month

The CDC has recently reported that efforts to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 “have led to decreased use of routine preventive medical services”. Vaccines have been hit particularly hard. In a few months, the influenza vaccine will be more necessary than ever.

Stars and Stripes reported on a study showing active duty soldiers with severe COVID-19 symptoms had preexisting health conditions to include obesity and high blood pressure.

This month is a critical time to remind our active duty and beneficiaries to make an appointment for routine care when it becomes available. This should include both recommended screenings for a potential early diagnosis and management for any existing conditions such as high blood pressure.

The CDC and NMCPHC August Toolbox have many resources to assist you with this process. While you are telling others to be sure and make appointments, do not forget yourself!

Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html>

<https://www.stripes.com/news/us/most-active-duty-soldiers-with-severe-covid-19-have-preexisting-health-conditions-study-finds-1.634681>

<https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/hp-toolbox-august.aspx>

Blue H Update

2019: We are proud to announce that the Blue H award for 2019 will report 506 awardees– the most ever awarded in its history! The breakdown shows 151 received a gold star, 103 received a silver eagle, and 252 received a bronze anchor. As this is being written, the letter is close to the end of the signature process. We are preparing packages and getting them ready to mail as soon as we receive the letter. The letter will go out electronically to the Blue H distribution list and, in the interest of speed and saving trees, no hard copies will be included in the package.

2020: There have been many inquiries into potential changes to the criteria due to challenges caused by the pandemic. The requests for change range from changing the scoring criteria to cancellation. We are also seeing a wide spectrum as to how commands are supporting HPW based on their local conditions. Some commands have increased email outreach, conducted ShipShape and meetings via Facebook Live and Microsoft Teams, and offered fitness challenges via email. Other commands have closed temporarily as staffing is redirected to COVID efforts.

We understand the pandemic is creating challenges for meeting some of the Blue H criteria. The Blue H team is continuing to monitor the impacts and we'll issue guidance towards the end of the year, as appropriate. For now, please continue to do the best you can with the resources and staffing you have at this time.

Please watch for updates as the year progresses.



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DOD Campaigns Release Overview Videos

The Defense Department's YouCanQuit2 (tobacco education) and Own Your Limits (responsible drinking) campaigns each developed new overview videos highlighting the campaign and featured resources available to Service members. The videos can be found at the links below and include both low- and high-resolution versions.

YouCanQuit2 video: <https://www.ycq2.org/about-us/>

Own Your Limits video: <https://www.ownyourlimits.org/about-us/>

Here are a few ways health promotion staff and other professionals can use the videos on installations:

- Download and play it at MWR facilities like fitness centers, in MTF waiting rooms, or on your local commander's channel.
- Use it at stand-downs throughout the year or pair with your mandatory GMTs.
- Link to the video from your installation or MTF webpage along with your other tobacco cessation/responsible drinking information.
- Include in your POM/POW/POD notes especially during campaign related awareness months or observances such as the Great American Spit Out (February), Alcohol Awareness Month (April), the '101 Critical Days of Summer', and Tobacco Cessation Month (November).

For more information, questions or to let the campaigns know how you're using the videos, contact [YouCanQuit2](#) or [Own Your Limits](#).

Decreasing Stress through Exercise

Many people have more stress than usual lately. The situations going on in the world right now are certainly challenging. Coping with stress in healthy ways will make you and the people you care about stronger.

One way to limit the effects of stress is to incorporate exercise or physical activity into daily routines. Thirty minutes of routine exercise can make a big difference. Examples of 30-minute activity sessions:

- Riding a bike or walking around the neighborhood. Carry your mask in case you need it, but this is deemed relatively safe during this time of the pandemic as long as you can social distance.
- Performing a 30-minute NOFFS app training session at home.
- Playing a recreational sport or activity.

Not only will you increase your physical activity, but you will also be able to take a step away from social distancing at home and get some fresh air. Exercise provides a great opportunity to reflect upon and appreciate the joys life has to offer. Even in these trying times, there is much to be grateful for.



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Using Good Nutrition to Fuel a Healthy Immune System

COVID-19 has changed lives in ways that we did not anticipate and, even though we still have a lot of unanswered questions, we do know that maintaining a healthy immune system will help us. The virus seems to attack those that are more susceptible to the disease – and if you are in poor health, or are feeling run-down, you may be at increased risk for a negative outcome. It has never been more important to take care of yourself every single day, so that your body is prepared to fight.

Nutrition plays a very large role in giving your body the tools it needs to keep your immune system in top shape. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), eating foods that are “nutrient dense” will provide these essential nutrients that a healthy body needs. These nutrients can be found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and healthy fats in recommended portions. Processed foods often have many nutrients removed, so, as often as possible, choose foods that are “close to the farm” with as little processing as possible. For example: chicken or fish rather than protein powders or a whole apple instead of apple juice.

According to Health Risk Assessments, most of our sailors and civilians self-report they do not eat the recommended portions of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. The USDA MyPlate food model recommends filling half your plate at each meal with vegetables and fruits. Aim to include 2-3 servings of fruits and vegetables at every meal to meet the daily goal of 5-8 servings per day. That may sound like a lot, but whole fruits and vegetables are the most nutrient dense foods you can choose.

If you do choose to use dietary supplements, check with a local registered dietitian or use the website www.OPSS.org to check your supplement to make sure there are no known concerns. The military also has programs like Go for Green (G4G) in galleys and dining facilities, and the Nutrition Guide Program (NGP) established at Defense Commissaries. Both of these programs use color coded tags to help you more easily identify foods that support a healthy diet. Using all of these resources can take some of the guesswork out of eating healthier and help you keep your immune system at its best. When in doubt, you can also turn to your Health Promotion and Wellness Department for ideas on how to get started!

Deployment Readiness Education for Service Women (DRES) Handbook

The [DRES Handbook](#) includes information on healthy practices and available resources to support service women’s healthcare needs and challenges before and during deployment. This was written by Navy Medicine providers across the Navy and Marine Corps to provide easily accessible, comprehensive, and unbiased health education to service women across the force. The goal is to equip service women with the information they need to understand their bodies, use preventive practices, identify symptoms of concern, and navigate the Military Health System (MHS).

Once the Handbook is downloaded, service women do not need WiFi to access the content. For easy navigation, patients can search the topic they are interested in or click on a topic in the table of contents to go directly to that section.



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Fish Tacos: Microwave Summer Food at it's best!

If you live anywhere near the ocean—as most Sailors and Marines do! - Fish Tacos are a favorite summer food. You can use any type of fish, but snapper, halibut, swordfish, tilapia, or salmon work best for this recipe. This cooks in under 5 minutes! The condiments take a little longer to prepare, but the effort is deliciously worth it. Serves 4.

First: Get your condiments ready.
Ideas are:

Salsa Mexicana
Chunky Guacamole
Chopped fresh cucumbers
Hot sauce
Sour cream or Greek yogurt
Shredded Monterey Jack cheese
Shredded lettuce or cabbage
Chopped cilantro
Lime wedges

Salsa Mexicana: Make up to a day in advance!

3 large tomatoes cored, seeded, and diced into 1/4" pieces
1/4 cup finely diced red onion
2-3 Tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
1 jalapeño chile, stemmed, seeded, and finely minced
1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Stir well, and let stand for at least 30 minutes at room temperature before serving. This can be made and refrigerated, covered, up to 1 day in advance. If you make it ahead, drain off any excess liquid and season with salt before serving.

Chunky Guacamole:

3 ripe avocados
1/4 cup finely diced red onion
Salt and pepper to taste
1 plum tomato, diced
1/2 serrano chile, stemmed, seeded, and finely minced
2 limes halved

Peel and pit the avocados and place in a small mixing bowl. Gently mash with a fork, leaving the avocado pits in to help keep the avocado green. Fold in the tomato, onion, and chile. Season with salt and pepper. Squeeze the limes over the top. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to 12 hours.

Second: Prepare your fish!

1/2 white onion chopped
3 tablespoons water or chicken broth
1-2 tablespoons olive oil
Pure chile powder, such as ancho, to taste
1 whole 1 jalapeño chile, stemmed, seeded, and minced
1 1/2 pounds boneless white fish filets (1 inch thick)
Salt and Pepper to taste
8-12 fresh corn tortillas

Place the onion and chile in a microwave safe casserole dish, spreading them out over the bottom of the dish. Add the water. Arrange the fish fillets in a single layer on top and rub olive oil on the surface of the fillets. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and a bit of chile powder. If the ends of the fillets are thin, tuck them under to make an even layer. Cover the dish with a layer of paper towels. Cook on HIGH for about 3 minutes for a 1-inch thick fillet, until the fish flakes. Remove from the oven.

Wrap the stack of tortillas in a slightly damp paper towel. Place in the microwave and cook on HIGH for about 1 minute. Assemble your taco and enjoy!!

