

MAY 2017

 **Healthyroads**™

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Wellness and Healthy Living Detox Your Life: The Air You Breathe

Air pollution. Gas fumes. Pesticides. Asphalt. Step outside on any given day and you encounter a long list of pollutants. As the last in a 3-part series on everyday toxins, this article looks at those you inhale or touch when you step out the door.

Smog. Unless you live in a pristine rural setting, smog is a fact of modern life. Air pollution is composed of a number of pollutants that can put your health at risk. Noxious gases in smog include carbon monoxide, mainly from car exhaust, and nitrogen and sulfur oxides. Then there are particulates. These come from dust, lead, and the byproducts of fossil fuel burning. The main ingredient in smog, though, is ozone—not the good kind that protects the atmosphere. This is ground-level ozone. It forms when sunlight meets the results of combustion. Together, these pollutants can cause serious health problems, like asthma and cardiovascular disease. To protect yourself, check the Air Quality Index before outdoor exercise or long days outside. Don't walk or bike near busy streets. And stay inside during the warmest part of the day when smog is at its worst.

Gas fumes. Benzene is a sweet-smelling liquid that evaporates quickly. It is found in gasoline, crude oil, and cigarette smoke. Inhaling a big draught can cause dizziness, rapid heart rate, headaches, and drowsiness. Long-term exposure can cause cancer. Moral of the story? Don't inhale gas fumes—or cigarette smoke.

Pesticides. Pesticides often used around homes and neighborhoods have a host of toxins. These include arsenic, benzene, and formaldehyde just to start. Some cause cancer. Others cause birth defects or disrupt hormones. If you use pesticides, always follow the label. And remove your shoes at the door so you're less likely to track them inside.

Asphalt. Asphalt parking lots and driveways are often sprayed with a sealant to help them last longer. In the eastern U.S., this sealant is made with coal-tar pitch, a carcinogen. It also contains chemicals (PAHs) that are suspected carcinogens. Some of these vaporize off asphalt as gas. Others are worn into dust by tires and snowplows. The dust is blown by wind or tracked into homes. People living near this sealed asphalt have a higher risk of cancer. Learn more by searching "sealed asphalt dangers" online.

Knowledge is power. Know what's out there so you can find ways to limit your exposure.

Welcome to
HEALTHYROADS!

In this monthly newsletter, you'll find a collection of articles on popular health and wellness topics. If you'd like additional support in your quest to lose weight, improve nutrition, develop an exercise plan, reduce stress, or quit smoking, visit us online at www.healthyroads.com.

There, you can find a collection of tools to help you reach your health goals.

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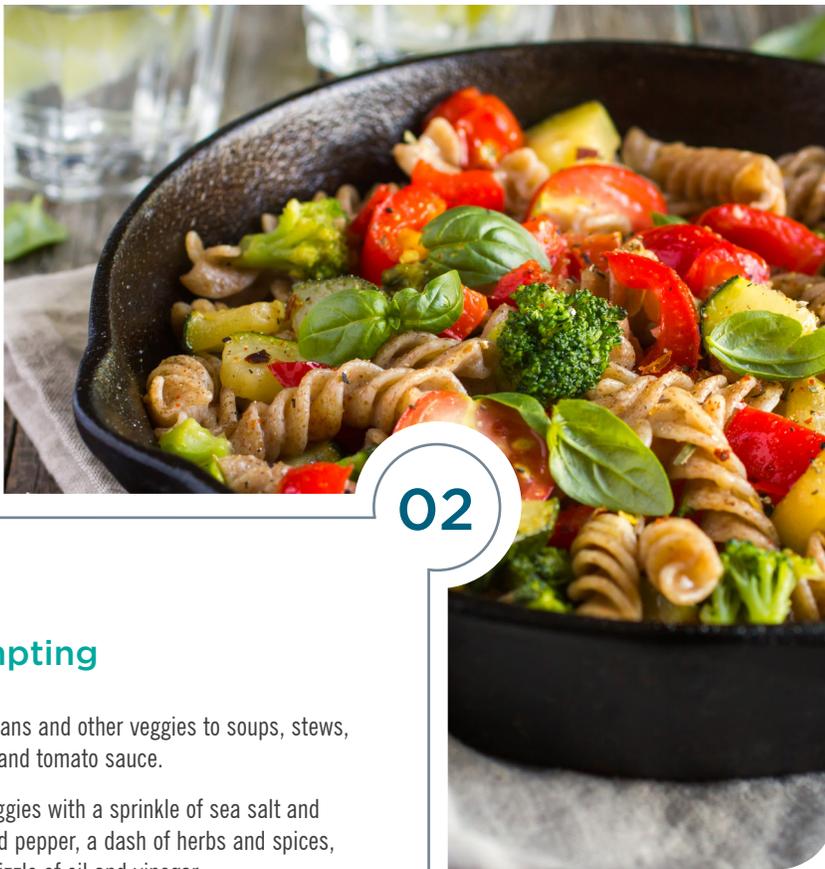
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Life Skills
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02

Nutrition and Weight Management 8 Ways to Make Vegetables More Tempting

While vegetables are healthy, they're not always high on the list of family favorites. But there are easy—and healthy—ways to make veggies a little more tempting.

Veggies are packed with vitamins and minerals. Plus, they're high in fiber and rich in antioxidants. They also happen to be low in calories and unhealthy fats. Giving veggies a starring role in your food plan can have huge health benefits. It can help you manage your weight and control your blood pressure. Plus, it can help lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer.

But most adults don't eat enough veggies. Experts recommend that most women eat 2.5 – 3 cups of veggies a day. For men, the recommended amount is 3 – 4 cups a day. Most people only eat about half of that amount each day.

To some extent, veggies are an acquired taste. That is, you can learn to like them by eating more of them. But, until you like them, how can you make it easier to eat them? You may be tempted to add butter, cream, or cheese to your veggies—or fry them. That can add flavor, but it also adds a lot of extra calories and unhealthy fat. Here are 8 healthy ways to make your veggies a little more tempting:

1. Squeeze fresh lemon over steamed veggies to brighten up the flavor.
2. Serve raw veggies with a healthy dip. You could try nut butter, bean dip, hummus, guacamole, or low-fat cottage cheese.
3. Blend veggies, such as spinach and beets, with fruit to make smoothies.

4. Add beans and other veggies to soups, stews, chilis, and tomato sauce.
5. Top veggies with a sprinkle of sea salt and cracked pepper, a dash of herbs and spices, or a drizzle of oil and vinegar.
6. Toss fresh, chopped veggies, such as peppers, onions, and carrots, with lettuce or shredded cabbage for a tasty salad or slaw. Serve with a healthy dressing.
7. Roast, grill, sauté, or stir-fry veggies to bring out their sweetness.
8. Mix sautéed veggies with a whole grain, such as brown rice, whole wheat pasta, or barley, for a tasty side dish.

Also, buy fresh, seasonal veggies, as they tend to have the best flavor. Experiment with recipes that feature veggies. And don't be afraid to try new veggies. You just may find one that you love at first bite.

HEALTH TIP:

Veggies are super healthy, but you may have to learn to like them. Try them with hummus or nut butter. Sneak them into smoothies, soups, and stews. And roast or grill them to boost their flavor.



SERIOUS ABOUT QUITTING?

We at Healthyroads understand the challenges of quitting smoking. That's why we offer a variety of online tools and articles to help you quit—once and for all. Our web-based tools give you every chance to succeed. For anyone considering quitting smoking, take the first step and visit www.healthyroads.com.

Active Living Dance...Revolution!

So you think you *can't* dance? Maybe you just haven't checked out the dance landscape lately. Dance has reinvented itself as an everyman game. There are new forms emerging all the time, not to mention old forms being rediscovered. From the kooky canter of Gangnam style to the crisp energy of stepping, there's a dance form for every taste and ability.

For all that diversity, most dance forms still have a pretty awesome selling point in common. They're a good workout with a host of benefits. Dance may:

- * Build muscle, strength, aerobic fitness, and flexibility
- * Lower your stress and boost your mood
- * Bring new friends into your life

Another selling point of dance is that it's got some built-in motivational advantages. The right music can make you want to move. That can make getting started a bit easier than with other workouts. And dancing is just naturally fun. That can help you keep going once you start.

Even if you've never thought dancing was for you, there's probably a style that can change your mind. If classic styles are just too stuffy for you, try hip hop, breaking, or animation. And if you're not "street," then maybe something with international flair will fire you up. How about sexy Argentine tango? Exotic Middle Eastern belly dancing? Intense Spanish flamenco? And don't be too quick to count out classic styles. They're being rediscovered and reinvented all the time. Case in point: Tap is actually cool again.

The booming popularity of dance has opened up more chances to learn even wacky styles like, well, waacking (really, it's a dance). You may be able to find lessons in your local dance studio. And, if not, there's a good chance you'll find video lessons on the web. Or you might find other people in your area who are meeting up for practice.

If you're new to dancing or exercise—or have an injury or health condition—talk with your doctor first. And be patient with yourself. There's often a learning curve with any new dance form. Just remember that it's not about how you look while you're dancing. It's about how you feel.



Life Skills

Letting Go of Love

Close relationships can bring some of life's greatest rewards. But relationships don't always last. And the end of that connection can be devastating. Here are some words of advice to help you cope during this time—and perhaps even learn and grow from your experience.

Why do breakups hurt so much? To start, the end of a close relationship represents a profound loss. It's not just a loss of the other person, which is huge by itself, but also of support, shared dreams, and even identity. You may have become so intertwined with the other person that it takes time to remember, or rebuild, who you are on your own. And if you were best friends, then you have lost your confidant, too.

Loss isn't the only issue. A breakup can cause titanic shifts in your day-to-day life. Your home, daily routine, responsibilities, and relationships with others may all be disrupted. You may feel adrift in your life, untethered. The future may no longer seem clear.

So how do you make it through this time and recover? Here are some strategies that may help:

- * **Give yourself the time to heal.** Reduce demands on your time, stressors, and work to the bare minimum. Give yourself permission to rest. Nurture yourself.
- * **Let your feelings flow.** Don't try to stuff them down or medicate them. Feel them—they won't last forever. Try journaling or sharing them with someone.
- * **Don't go through it alone.** Isolation will only make things worse. Get support from friends and family.

- * **Follow a routine.** A routine can restore a much-needed sense of normalcy.
- * **Take time to reflect.** What benefits have you gained from this experience? What did you learn about yourself? What might you do differently next time?
- * **Get in touch with *you*.** What are your interests? Goals? Unlived dreams? What parts of yourself got neglected during the relationship? Start to nurture these.

Grief is normal at the end of a relationship. So take time to grieve the loss. Little by little, it will lift. If not, it may be depression. That's when it's time to seek professional help.

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