

Spring and Summer offer their own health challenges, many of which can be handled – or better yet avoided - with a little forethought. There is no way to stop the enthusiasm people get in them when the weather changes. So it should come as no surprise that spring brings with it a rash of accidents and injuries. Here are a few reminders and several helpful hints to deal with injuries, accidents and some of the dangers and stresses that come with the good weather.

Home renovations and gardening bring their share of sprains and strains, as do outdoor sports. The primary reason for this is that our metabolism slows down drastically in the winter and we eat heavier foods, both eventuating in a kind of metabolic sluggishness. Our muscles (where metabolism takes place,) are not moving smoothly, our reflexes are slow, and the air is chilled, making our muscles contract.

The best way to prevent problems is to start slow and take lots of breaks. If you are moving stuff around, start with the small stuff and build on it. Give yourself a chance to wake up your core strength and limber up your limbs. If you do get a strain or a sprain, refrain from putting an icepack on. Cold is definitely better than hot but a towel soaked in ice water is much safer than an ice pack. If you should snooze or get distracted while wearing an ice pack it is too easy to get frostbite on top of your strain and then you have a complication that can severely limit the healing of the initial injury as well as causing secondary damage that can be just as injurious, or worse. When the sprain is a week or two old you can use hot and cold in alternation, five minutes hot and three minutes cold, three rounds in alternation ending in cold, this increases drainage and the influx of fresh healing blood. And then there is Arnica Montana, a homeopathic remedy that speeds up the healing of soft tissue injuries, controls the infiltration of excess scar tissue, pain and bruising. Depending on how severe the injury, it should be taken at one pellet 3-4 times a day, a 30c potency for mild injury or 200c for more severe trauma.

Sun exposure is another common issue in the summer. Recent studies show that the incidence of skin cancer is higher with the use of commercial sunscreens. To avoid sun damage you need to limit exposure and get out of the sun when it is at its zenith; between 11am-1pm, Shea butter has a natural SPF of about 6. You can strengthen your cell walls by using organic coconut oil on your skin daily and taking 1/4 cup of aloe vera juice. Aloe helps to build epithelium (the outer layer of skin) at a faster rate and increases the production of T cells, you can also use it topically after sun exposure. To ease a burn, should you get one, you can take a bath with 3-4 cups of apple cider vinegar or use a spray with 10% vinegar in the water, to control the prickling heat and increase the body's healing. Drink lots of fluids if you have extensive sun exposure. You can also use homeopathic Cantharis to address burns of all types, use 30c, 1 pellet 3-4 times a day, until symptoms pass. Remember Cantharis for campfire, BBQ and other burns as well. Bee and wasp stings are a little less common, perhaps because our bee colonies are dying, but they can still happen. The best solution I know of is homeopathic Apis 30c, another great remedy to have on hand. Apis will take the pain and swelling away promptly and I have seen it work 2 weeks after a wasp sting where the skin was indurated (hard) and painful.

If you have pets or are travelling you might consider the added risk, with the higher rate of socializing in public areas, of getting parasites. You and your pets can safely take Cina homeopathic 30c, 3-4 times a day, to address an infestation of roundworms. To break the cycle you will want to be on Cina for 6-8 weeks. Fresh garlic and brewers yeast will also help to ward off worms and fleas and you can give this to your pets 2 times a day; dogs will eat anything in cheese whiz. If you or your animals are recovering from parasites you should consider taking a good probiotic and aloe vera juice as parasites can do a lot of damage to the intestinal wall.

The most common companion to recreational injuries is alcohol. As you know the first thing to go with alcohol is judgment. The best way to protect against recreational accidents is to make sure everyone knows the rules of the sport, where the first aid kit is and be sure to go through the ropes with neophytes before you relax and unwind.

Drivers of all kinds of vehicles need to remember that the influx of bikes is a change with the good weather, look out for each other! Car drivers, look behind you before opening the driver door when you are parking on the side of the road and remember to keep some distance from the curb so bikes can travel safely. Bikers need to remember that cars have blind spots and if you are riding curbside you are almost always in somebody's blind spot. If an injury occurs you can use the same protocol for soft tissue injury above and go to the hospital if you have a head injury or think you have torn tissue or broken a bone.

Have a safe and glorious spring/summer and stay healthy.