

# the BETTER BULLETIN

2020 Spring/Summer Edition



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## Health Benefits of Spring Cleaning

*Spring cleaning has been around for a while. It's rooted in cultural traditions that are thousands of years old. And the timing may have a biological explanation.*

Winter is a sleepy period. During this cold and gray season, most of us just want to curl up on the nearest couch, watch movies under a blanket and drink hot liquids. Once the sun and warmth return, we have more energy to care about all those dust bunnies collecting beneath the coffee table.

It makes sense that ancient tradition and our own natural instincts have led us to clean in the spring: it's actually good for our health. How? Here are a few things that spring cleaning can help you accomplish.



### REDUCE STRESS

Simple and repetitive tasks like dusting can be all it takes to turn your brain off. Or, it can just as easily be a practice in mindfulness. It's all about your intention. Another way to ramp up the anxiety-reducing effects of your housework is to do something that's more physically demanding, like vacuuming, mopping or wiping down kitchen cabinets and appliances. Spring is also a good time to clean out closets and get more organized.



### ENCOURAGE SLEEP

Have you ever noticed the difference between sleeping in a messy bed and one that's freshly laundered and made? What about in a room littered with dirty laundry versus one that's free from clutter? These details can impact our ability to relax and drift into deep, quality Zzzs. Organize your space for more calm.



### LIFT MOOD

Aside from these reasons, which are also great ways to improve mood, it just feels good to accomplish something. Even achieving small goals can cause your brain to release the "feel good" chemical dopamine. And who doesn't want that? So, go ahead and make that to-do list for yourself just so you can check off items along the way. Small wins!

SOURCES: [www.parsleyhealth.com/blog/health-benefits-spring-cleaning](http://www.parsleyhealth.com/blog/health-benefits-spring-cleaning) · [www.mentalfloss.com/article/78273/get-swept-away-these-8-facts-about-spring-cleaning](http://www.mentalfloss.com/article/78273/get-swept-away-these-8-facts-about-spring-cleaning)  
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## Making the Best of Your Summer

*Physical activity and relaxing in nature are among the most important things you can do for your mental and physical well-being. This summer, get the best of both worlds by filling your days with plans that allow a little of each!*

Try some of these outdoor activities to make the most of this fun season.

### **SPEND A MORNING OUTDOORS**

Being still and reflecting on your thoughts is a great way to create inner peace. Choose a free morning in your week and get a good night's rest the evening before. When you wake up, pack a bag with a journal, a pen and something you can sit or lie down on. Make yourself your favorite kind of iced coffee drink to go—plus a snack, if you haven't eaten breakfast. Carry it all along to your porch, patio, balcony or yard, then settle down in a nice spot and get journaling!

### **HAVE A PICNIC**

Treat yourself to a nice meal out in the open. Before you go, prepare a festive drink like fruit-infused water or lemonade. Chill it in a portable container. Pack it in a cooler with ice packs and some easy-to-eat foods like sandwiches or cheese slices and vegetable sticks with hummus. Bring a blanket, a book, napkins, hand sanitizer or wipes and any utensils you need. Don't forget sunscreen, your sunglasses and water! Find your favorite nearby spot and enjoy—even if it's your own porch, patio, balcony or yard.

SOURCES:  
[www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/25-ways-to-move-more-during-summer](http://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/25-ways-to-move-more-during-summer)  
[www.space.com/39469-best-meteor-showers.html](http://www.space.com/39469-best-meteor-showers.html)  
[www.telescopesplus.com/pages/our-top-10-must-haves-for-a-night-of-stargazing](http://www.telescopesplus.com/pages/our-top-10-must-haves-for-a-night-of-stargazing)



### **GO STARGAZING**

Too hot to spend much time outdoors during the day? Try going outside after the sun goes down! Step outside and lay out a beach towel or blanket. Here you can lie back and watch nature's beauty in the warm night. Even better, plan your outing for a time when there is supposed to be [a meteor shower!](#) Be sure to bring your own music, drink and bug spray. Enjoy the show!

## Give Your Immune System a Natural Boost

All of us want to be as healthy as we can be. This means we must protect our immune systems and strengthen them to the best of our abilities. Fortunately, there are many actions we can take to naturally boost the body's immunity.

Read on for four ways you can improve your health.



### EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

What you eat is an important part of how you feel. Nutritious foods—especially fresh produce—can boost mood and protect the body from disease. As a general rule, try to incorporate one or two servings of fruits and vegetables into each meal. This might look like slicing up a banana on toast with nut butter or roasting broccoli to eat as a side dish.

### MOVE YOUR BODY



Getting daily exercise can have profound impacts on health. Whether you're lifting weights, jogging or dancing to your favorite music, it's a win. Regular exercise and physical activity can help you manage weight and chronic health conditions, plus give you more energy while improving sleep.



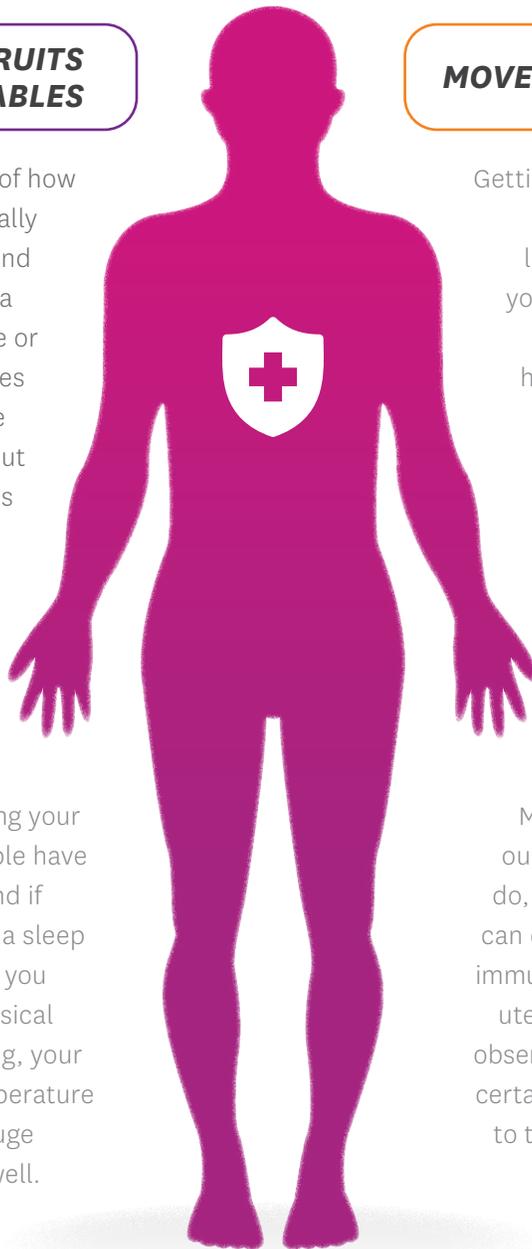
### START A SLEEP HYGIENE HABIT

Quality sleep is essential for keeping your mind and body healthy. Many people have trouble falling or staying asleep, and if this is an issue for you, developing a sleep hygiene routine could be just what you need. Things like your daytime physical activity level, your bedroom lighting, your intake of stimulants and what temperature you keep your home can make a huge difference in your ability to sleep well.

### OBSERVE GOOD FOOD SAFETY



Many of us have to prepare meals for ourselves and those we love. When we do, there are a number of behaviors we can control in the kitchen to protect our immune systems. Beyond washing hands, utensils and surfaces, it's important to observe food safety rules such as keeping certain raw meats separate, cooking food to the correct temperature and making sure to refrigerate food promptly.



## Get Your Grill On

When neighborhood grills start firing up, you know it's summer. Time to get out of the steam-filled kitchen and into the backyard. Grilling is a wonderful way to add a smoky twist to chicken, steaks, veggies and even dessert! Dessert? Yeah, we'll get to that shortly.

Here are a few ways to prepare some of your summer favorites in a healthier and safer manner on the grill:

### SPLAY OUT YOUR CHICKEN

Barbecued chicken is an American delight. But preparing it on the grill can be a pain—all that turning of each piece, not knowing if the thighs are still raw at the bone while the breasts are bone-dry. Here's one of the most helpful grilling tricks you'll learn all summer. If you don't care about another word in this newsletter, just check out this easy recipe for grilling a [spatchcocked chicken](#).

### ENJOY FRESH CORN WITHOUT BUTTER

Pour a couple tablespoons of Louisiana-style concentrated [liquid crab boil](#) into a large pot of water, and then drop in the fresh corn. You should be able to smell the spices during cooking. If you don't get a sharp whiff of the crab boil, just add a tad more (a little goes a long way). When the corn is finished, drain the water, squeeze some lemon juice over the ears, and sprinkle them with a salt-free spice such as Mrs. Dash or seasoned pepper. You'll be surprised by the unique, savory flavor. Just call it "no-guilt corn."

### GRILL YOUR DESSERT, TOO

Nope, we're not roasting marshmallows. Now we're going to make grilled [summer fruit kebabs](#) with fresh pineapple, peaches, and strawberries; a little olive oil; and a dash of sea salt. Although the grilling process intensifies the sugars in the fruit, you can also sprinkle the finished kebabs with a bit of brown sugar while they're still hot or drizzle them with honey or agave syrup after they cool. (Quick tip: soaking wooden skewers in water for 20 minutes before use helps prevent them from burning.)



*How's this for a summer menu that's packed with flavor, texture, and interest, yet light on calories and salt?*

*Be sure to place your grill on stable ground at least 10 feet away from any buildings or overhanging tree branches, and keep a connected water hose or fully-charged fire extinguisher within arm's reach.*

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<b>SECURE ONLINE MEMBER ACCOUNT</b> <a href="http://Member.AmbetterHealth.com">Member.AmbetterHealth.com</a>	
<b>PHONE</b> 1-855-650-3789 (TTY/TDD 1-877-250-6113)	
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<p><b>MAJOR MEDICAL EXPENSE POLICY</b></p> <p>Your Major Medical Expense Policy is a detailed document that lists all of the services and benefits that your particular plan covers. Your Major Medical Expense Policy can help you understand how to access medical care, what health services are covered by Ambetter and what portion of healthcare costs you will be required to pay.</p>	

If you have any additional questions, please visit:  
**[Ambetter.HomeStateHealth.com](http://Ambetter.HomeStateHealth.com)**

Contact Member Services for print versions of all informational materials: 1-855-650-3789 (TTY/TDD 1-877-250-6113)

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