

MEET George

George has been a Magna employee for 12 years and currently works at Magna Lowell in Alto, Michigan. His current role is a Senior Operations Manager. In this edition, George shares his passion for gardening and how this hobby has improved the mental and physical health of both him and his family.

George's love for gardening began during his high school years working on a vegetable farm. His garden started with a couple tomato plants and potted peppers on the balcony of his condominium.

Today, George's garden has transformed into a labor of love that gives his days a different focus of attention and provides some much-needed relaxation for his family. George's story started after he read a book called "How to Feed Your Family on ¼ Acre." The guidance he learned from this book eventually led to the transformation of his balcony garden into a full-fledged farm. After meeting his wife and moving from their condominium to a house with a small plot of land, George upgraded his potted garden to an 8'x12' plot and started growing a variety of small vegetables. As he expanded the garden, he became more active, both before and after work, to tend the garden and he noticed that his stress levels reduced the more time he spent outdoors.

George and his family soon decided to expand their farm again by adding a few animals. After some research they learned that chickens would be the perfect addition because they do not require a lot of space and also produce eggs that can be eaten by his family. Chickens were the first animals that called George's farm home, later followed by ducks, turkeys, geese, sheep, and goats. George admits that his farm has now become a passion. The effort of upkeep is hard work, but also very rewarding, as it gives his day more meaning and purpose.

In addition to the mental and physical health benefits that farming brings to George, his kids now help him and are heavily involved in maintaining the farm. They are responsible for

feeding the animals and collecting eggs to sell. The kids receive \$1 for every dozen sold and have learned the lesson that hard work can lead to reward. George believes it is very important for the next generation to learn how to farm and live off the land. His kids now spend much less time on technology and much more time outside, which he believes positively contributes to their mental health.

George's garden and farm provides fresh food for him and his family and also feeds the local community when there is an abundance of harvest. George sets a table out near the road with the extra produce and has a "take what you need, leave what you can" policy for the neighbours to enjoy. This provides fresh, local produce to the community in an affordable way.

George understands the health benefits he and his family have gained by gardening. Now, he wants more Magna employees and their families to find the same benefits in their lives.

George's advice to anyone looking to start a home garden is to "start small and enjoy the process. Gardening can be labor intensive, but equally as rewarding both physically and mentally."



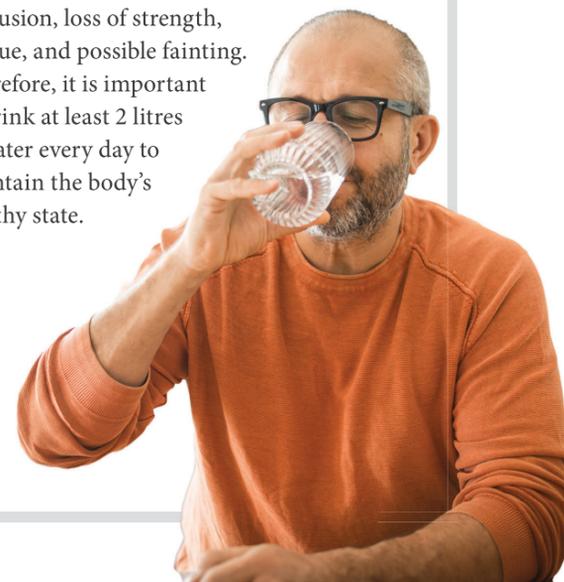
in THIS ISSUE

- 1 Meet George
Did You Know?
- 2 The Sunshine Vitamin
What is SPF?
Mental Health Corner
- 3 The Health Benefits of the Great Outdoors
- 4 Top 5 Outdoor Activity Ideas
Dry Rub Recipe

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that we sweat out approximately 1 litre of water every day?

The amount we sweat increases when we are physically active or spend time in hot weather. Losing water through sweat can lead to dehydration, which may cause dizziness, confusion, loss of strength, fatigue, and possible fainting. Therefore, it is important to drink at least 2 litres of water every day to maintain the body's healthy state.



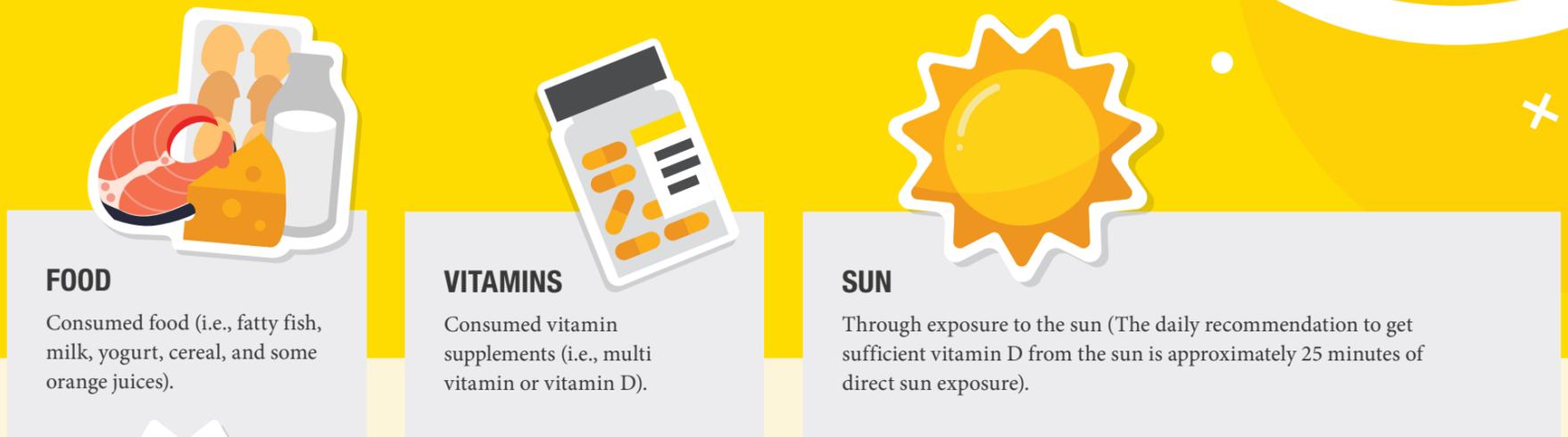
FOLLOW MAGNA WELLNESS

on Instagram [@magna_int](#) and YouTube [@magnawellness](#)

THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN

Vitamin D is known as the “sunshine vitamin” because our skin absorbs UV rays from sunlight and converts them into vitamin D.

It is an important vitamin for bone health and helps our bodies absorb calcium from the foods we eat. This combination helps reduce our risk of brittle bones and fractures. Vitamin D also helps regulate our mood and studies suggest that adequate vitamin D levels are linked to healthier immune systems. When our bodies are not getting enough vitamin D, symptoms of a deficiency may include weak bones, fatigue, depression, and reduced immunity. If you are concerned that you are not getting enough vitamin D, speak with your doctor about the best way for you to get more. In general, there are three main ways to increase vitamin D in the body:



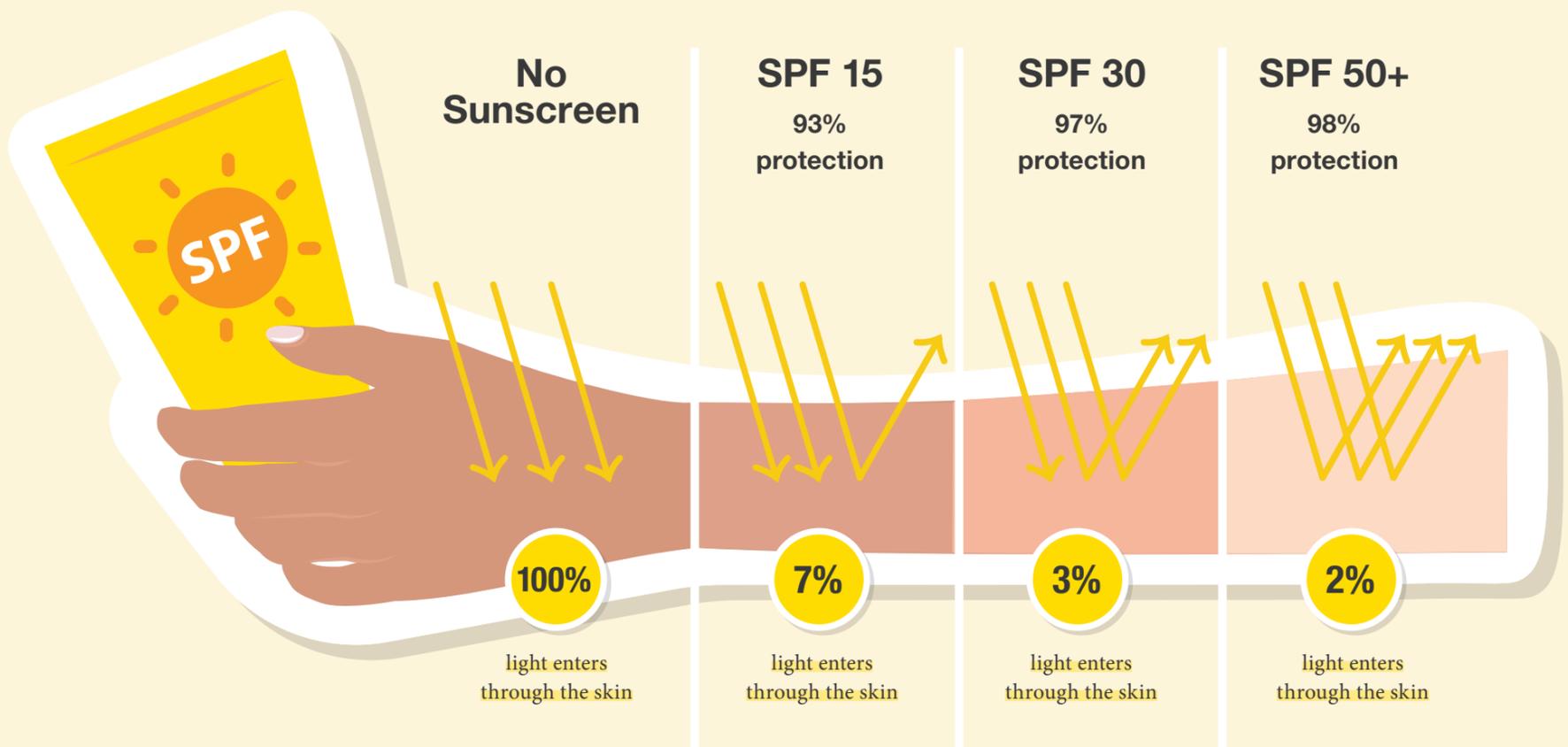
WHAT IS SPF?



If you try to increase vitamin D through sun exposure, consider your risk of sunburns. It is important to apply sunscreen to prevent skin damage.

S P F
Sun Protection Factor

SPF is a rating that determines how well a sunscreen will protect the skin from sun rays that cause sunburns. For example, if a sunscreen has an SPF of 30, this means only 1/30 of the sun rays will get through the sunscreen. Depending on your skin tone and the sun exposure at different times of day (i.e., more risk of sunburn midday), applying different levels of SPF sunscreen will allow you to stay in the sun longer than what it would typically take for you to get sunburned without sunscreen. In most cases, sunscreen with SPF 30 provides sufficient protection. To be safe, it is best to reapply sunscreen frequently, as well as after swimming or sweating, when the sunscreen may wear off.



MENTAL HEALTH CORNER:

Nature and Mental Health Benefits

There is a strong connection between time spent in nature and reduced negative emotions.

Walking outside in nature has been shown to have a positive impact on the health of our minds. It helps reduce stress. If we step away from a stressful situation and go for a short walk, our brain releases chemicals called endorphins which help relieve stress and improve our mood. Walking helps put our minds at ease by allowing us to feel calm, collected, and less anxious. Another benefit of walking



The Health Benefits of **THE GREAT OUTDOORS**

As a society, people are spending less time outside and more time inside looking at smart phones, laptops, and television. Spending time outdoors can boost well-being in many different ways. In general, spending 30 minutes outdoors at least 3-5 times a week can be enough to experience benefits. From a physical standpoint, exercising outdoors can help burn more calories than walking or running inside on a treadmill. When exercising outside, the distractions of our surroundings can help take our minds off the effort of working out. We may end up exercising longer than we would if we were exercising indoors.

Exercising does not only improve our physical health but also improves our mental well-being. Here are four ways that getting outdoors can improve our mental well-being:

1 IMPROVE SOCIAL CONNECTION

Regular physical activity can increase our self-confidence, making us feel stronger and healthier. When exercising outdoors, we also tend to have more social interactions. We may walk past neighbours and have a quick chat or meet someone new while playing a sport outdoors. These interactions help us create a stronger support system by connecting with friends, family, and the community.



2 REDUCE STRESS

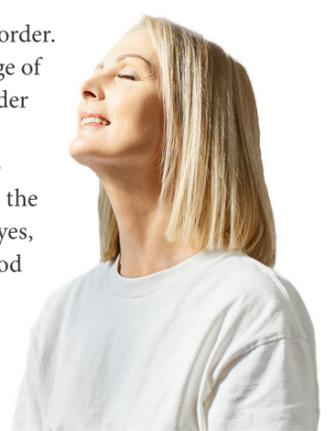
Stress is a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Everyone experiences stress at various points in life. Our bodies increase the production of a hormone called cortisol when we are stressed. This hormone is often called the stress hormone because it works with our brain to control mood and relieve the stress that we may be feeling. When it is constant, stress can lead to an excessive release of cortisol, which may cause the development of some chronic health issues. Spending 20-30 minutes outdoors in nature can help reduce both stress and the release of cortisol in the body.

3 REDUCE IRRITABILITY AND BOOST MOOD

It is normal to experience feelings of irritability and other negative emotions because of a certain life event. One of the ways to reduce these feelings is by spending time outdoors. Nature increases release of the body's happy hormone, called dopamine, which promotes a feeling of happiness. This mood boost can increase your desire for social connection, resulting in better mental well-being.

4 REDUCE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Sunlight can help improve both depression and seasonal affective disorder. Seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression related to the change of seasons, typically beginning in fall or winter. Symptoms of this disorder include feeling sad, loss of interest in usual activities, and a lack of energy. Symptoms typically worsen in the winter, then people start to feel relief during the sunnier days of spring. Spending time outside in the sunlight can help treat these symptoms. When sunlight enters your eyes, it causes your brain to produce serotonin and dopamine, the "feel-good hormones" in our body. In this way, spending 30 minutes outside each day can help improve overall mood.



If you are not sure where to start, try going for a walk in your neighbourhood. During the summer months, when the sun is out and the weather is good, try to take advantage of everything that nature has to offer!

outside is the exposure to fresh air. Breathing fresh air rejuvenates our minds and can help us feel more energetic, while also improving our creative thinking. Next time you feel like you are stressed about a situation or thought, try going for a short walk outside.

This can bring back inspiration and help find solutions to combat the stress. As we move into the summer months, now is the perfect time to put on some comfortable shoes and start spending time outside.





DRY RUB RECIPE

This homemade seasoning mix has a rich, smokey flavour to add to any of your summer grilling meals. With no added sugar, this is a healthier option compared to premade store-bought dry rubs.

INGREDIENTS

1.5 TSP	Chili powder
1 TSP	Salt
1 TSP	Pepper
1 TSP	Garlic powder
1 TSP	Smoked paprika
½ TSP	Onion powder
½ TSP	Cayenne pepper (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Measure each ingredient and add to a small dish. Use a spoon to mix well until fully combined.
2. This dry rub can be rubbed directly onto the meat or vegetable you are preparing, or you can apply a small amount of olive oil over the surface before adding the dry rub.
3. Transfer any extra dry rub mixture to an airtight container and store at room temperature until ready for next use.

TOP 5 OUTDOOR Activity Ideas

Now that you understand the health benefits of getting outdoors, here are five outdoor activities that you can try this summer.

These activities will help you have a memorable time while absorbing all the benefits that nature has to offer:

1

Fruit and vegetable picking

As the summer months rollout, many local farms open their doors to the public for local sales and personal “picking” experiences. While spending time in nature, this activity also helps you support local farmers and reap the benefits of fresh, nutritious produce.



2

Water activities

Warm summer days are the perfect excuse to get into the water. Public beaches and pools offer swimming, and many beaches may also offer activity rentals such as kayaking, paddleboarding, and canoeing.



3

Hiking

A simple search on the internet can help you find hiking trails in your area. Hiking is a perfect way to admire nature while increasing your physical activity efforts. Before going for a hike, ensure that you have proper clothing and shoes to prevent any injuries.



4

Playing sports

The list of sports that can be played outside are endless. Warm days are a great opportunity to pick up your favourite sport and practice outside. You can go even further by joining a summer sports league to meet new people!



5

Going on a picnic

If you are looking to spend time outside in a relaxing way, take your family or friends on a picnic. Picnics are easy to organize as you only need a few essential items such as blankets, folding chairs, and your favourite foods. If you are with a group of people, you can also bring fun games such as frisbee, badminton, football, or even board games.



FOR MORE articles, employee stories, quizzes, and recipes, please visit magnawellness.ca

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send your suggestions/comments to Magna Wellness at:
 375 Magna Drive, Aurora, Ontario L4G 7L6
 E wellness@magna.com
 P (905) 726-7490

MAGNA and **GOOD for you**
 are registered trademarks of Magna International Inc.