



rural spotlight

Warmer temperatures bring allergies. While your thoughts may turn to outdoor activities such as gardening and yard cleanup, those with seasonal allergies are seeing mold and pollen counts rise. For many, allergies can ruin this time of year.

Tips to Beat Spring & Summer Allergies

Some people are allergic to pollen. An allergy spray's effectiveness is linked to using it a week or two before pollen season begins. Allergens tend to hit their peaks around mid-morning, so if you plan to participate in outdoor activities, schedule them either before or after this time. If you have to be outside, consider using a dust mask and gloves while working. Remember to wash immediately when you come indoors.

While it may not seem hot enough to turn the AC on, opening the windows and doors can let in pollen spores that will irritate your eyes and nose. The same goes for driving or riding in the car. Sometimes, when trying to prevent allergy symptoms, re-circulating the air inside the car is a better solution than rolling down the windows.

Allergy symptoms include stuffy or runny nose, itchy or watery eyes and sneezing. Using a saline solution two times a day to clean your nasal passages may help alleviate allergy symptoms. If this doesn't work and symptoms continue, see your family doctor.

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Healthy Recipe

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Missouri Department
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Managing Arthritis & Osteoporosis

Having knowledge of chronic health conditions and their personal effects can help you take control of your health. Additionally, being actively engaged in one or more forms of physical activity can improve overall well-being. Through its seven Regional Arthritis Centers (RAC), the Missouri Arthritis and Osteoporosis Program offers three self-management and two physical activity programs around the state.

- 1.** The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and *Tomando Control de su Salud*, a Spanish program, address health topics in a culturally appropriate manner. These group-format courses offered by trained leaders meet once a week for 2.5 hours and continue for six weeks. Topics include appropriate use of health care systems; evaluating new treatments; dealing with chronic conditions; appropriate exercise; appropriate medication use; communicating effectively with family, friends and health professionals; nutrition; and setting goals.
- 2.** The Arthritis Toolkit is an independent-format, six-week course designed for your own use. The toolkit draws from topics in the Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program (six-week group course), including self-management of arthritis-specific conditions. The Arthritis Toolkit may be checked out from your local RAC.
- 3.** The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program is a group-format course offered by trained leaders that meets two to three times per week for six weeks. Some sites choose to offer the program year-round. Topics include: range-of-motion, flexibility, balance, strengthening and endurance-building activities; relaxation techniques; and health education topics.



- 4.** The Walk With Ease Program is offered in group or independent formats. In the group course, trained leaders work with participants three times a week for six weeks. For the independent course, individuals use a workbook three times a week for six weeks. Topics include pain management; walking routine development; stretching; and warming up and cooling down.

Year-round courses are designed for individuals with risk factors for or with chronic health conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. Individuals with multiple chronic health conditions may find additional benefit from the courses and learn how their conditions interact and impact their overall health. Self-management courses can also benefit caregivers or families of those with chronic conditions.

For a schedule of courses, visit www.moarthritis.org/regional-arthritis-centers.html. If a course isn't listed in your area, contact a RAC toll-free at 1-888-702-8818, or visit www.moarthritis.org to begin a group or get on a waiting list. You can also contact a RAC to find out how to become a program leader. Learn more about the Missouri Arthritis and Osteoporosis Program on Facebook, www.facebook.com/MOArthritis.



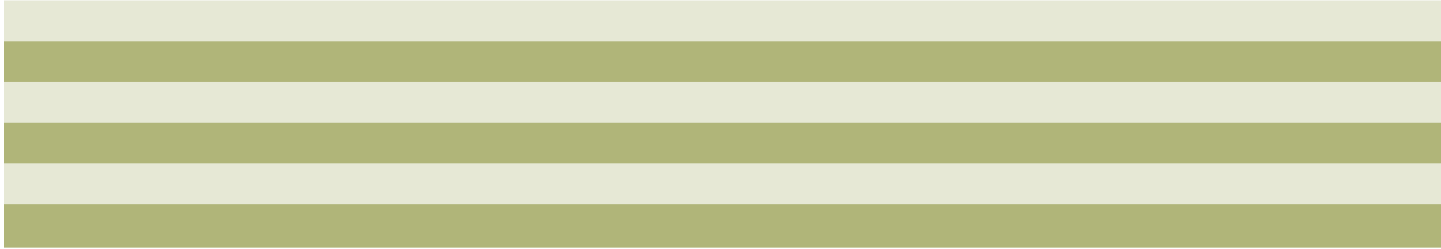
Veterans' Health at Home

The American Institute for Preventive Medicine has been working with Veterans Affairs on a variety of health education projects. The *Veterans Health at Home Self-Care Guide* aims to help vets make better decisions about when to seek professional assistance as opposed to treating oneself at home. Several VA studies have shown that use of the guide significantly reduces unnecessary doctor and ER visits, and calls to the nurse triage center. The guide is available as a full-color book and electronically in PDF. For more information, see http://www.aipm.net/VA/VA_Lifetime.pdf. In addition, the institute has other self-care guides geared toward the general population, which have been used for rural health population initiatives. For more information, visit <http://www.aipm.net/VA/VA%20Products/vaproducts.htm>.



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Your health information is protected *By* federal law

Most of us believe that our medical and other health information is private and should be protected, and we want to know who has this information. The HIPAA Privacy Rule gives you rights over your health information and sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive it. The Privacy Rule applies to all forms of individuals' health information, whether electronic, written, or oral. The Security Rule, a federal law that protects health information in electronic form, requires entities covered by HIPAA to ensure that electronic protected health information is secure.

To find out more on protecting your health information, go to
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html>

Finding Information on Missouri Insurance Companies

Many people worry about the changes in health insurance and how it will affect them in the coming years. Whether shopping for insurance for yourself, family, or employees, the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration offers a broad range of information on companies it regulates. The companies include insurance agencies, HMOs, third party administrators, extended service contract providers and many more.



License and Contact Information: This website allows you to verify that a company is properly licensed, and provides contact information for that company. You should be able to search for any licensed company here. If you can't find a company, call the Insurance Consumer Hotline for help at 800-726-7390. The website is

<https://sbs-mo.naic.org/Lion-Web/jsp/sbsreports/CompanySearchLookup.jsp>.

Company data: How much business did an insurance company write last year? How does it fare with consumer complaints? How did it rank among its competitors? How did the company look in its most recent financial examination? Has the company ever undergone a market conduct exam that found violations of Missouri law? Has the company ever changed its name? This data is available through the search link on the main page at

<http://insurance.mo.gov/CompanyAgentSearch/search/search-companies.php>.

There are also "Quick Links" listed on the main web page for other searches related to insurance: "File a Complaint," "Complaint Index," "Find an Agent/Agency," "Find Insurance Company," "Company Changes," "Financial Exams," "Market Conduct," "Mergers & Acquisitions and Statistical Reports."



When You Clean

Spring has finally sprung with summer close on its heels. Now is the time to clean up the clutter and create a clean space. There are therapeutic benefits to making room in your mind, spirit and home for the people and things that truly matter to you. Using products without toxic chemicals, combined with a little elbow grease, can welcome this season into your home with clean “green” style.

Spring into summer with these seven cleaning tips that would make Mother Nature smile.

- 1. Home Inventory.** Grab two large garbage bags and go through your home. Use one bag for items to be recycled and the other for charity donations. Don't linger over this process. The longer you linger during the decision process, the more clutter you keep.
- 2. Use Old Towels for Cleaning Cloths Instead of Paper Towels.** Old towels can be used over and over for cleaning rags. The additional cost and environmental savings are huge.
- 3. Green All-Purpose Cleaner.** Grab a clean empty spray bottle and mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking soda with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white vinegar. This is a great all-purpose cleaner at minimal cost.
- 4. For Surfaces Requiring a Grittier Cleaning Solution.** Soak your cleaning sponge in white vinegar, then sprinkle baking soda on the vinegar-soaked sponge and scrub your kitchen sink or tub until it sparkles.
- 5. Use Earth Friendly Cloths/Pads with Your Mop.** Use a natural solution of 1 cup white vinegar and 1 gallon hot water. If washing hardwood surfaces, add a few drops of olive oil to vinegar/hot water mixture.
- 6. Clean Out Your Fridge.** Check your food and toss what has expired or is a long-term leftover. Again, an effective and food-safe cleaner is white vinegar, so wash surfaces with it. While you are at it, clean off the top, back and underneath of refrigerator.
- 7. Use Natural Air Purifiers.** Houseplants and especially spider plants are very efficient natural ways to clean the air in your home. If you have a dark space, hang a Moso bag that contains moso bamboo, a natural dehumidifier. Not only will it absorb and filter odors, it also clears harmful pollutants, allergens and bacteria out of the air.



KIDS Corner

Try a Scavenger Hunt

Kid Friendly Fun for a Rainy Day

Spring and early summer are known for rain and ruining cheerful plans for outside activities with your kids. But don't let the rain dampen your fun. With a few careful preparations, the next rainy day can be one the kids will remember. In fact, they may be wishing for more days of rain.

A scavenger hunt you say? A parent or older sibling can start one by making a list of items for the hunter(s) to find. Or, a parent or sibling can make a hunt more challenging by hiding written clues that must be solved in order for a hunter to find the next clue. Ordinary household items can become extraordinary discoveries. Decide on a prize for those who complete the hunt.

A scavenger hunt allows you and the kids to stay active on a rainy day rather than watch TV or play video games, and create a fun memory to last a lifetime.

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Simple Summer Salad Recipe

Ingredients

4 cups (handfuls) clean salad greens
½ small red onion, chopped
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
Dash of fine grain salt to taste

Juice only from:

1 ½ orange
½ lemon

½ cup walnut halves, toasted

¼ cup (or more depending upon taste) black pitted olives

1. Using a medium bowl, whisk together the juice of orange, lemon, olive oil, and salt. Whisk until thickened. Add most of the red onion. Taste and adjust with more salt or lemon juice if needed.
2. Peel remaining orange and cut into segments, being careful to remove seeds. Set aside.
3. Place salad greens in medium bowl. Toss with small amount of dressing.
4. Add the orange segments and walnuts. Toss again.
5. Taste and decide if you need to add more dressing. Add a small amount at a time, tossing salad between additions. If nuts and citrus pieces all go to bottom, bring them back up to top.
6. Add remaining red onion and olives. Serve and enjoy.

Source: www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/celebrate/Recipes.pdf

