



ANN BLOOM
IT'S ALL GOOD

Focus on your physical and mental health

The month of August is National Wellness Month, a month devoted to focusing on self-care and making every day count toward a lifetime of wellness, not just physical well-being, but also mental health and spiritual well-being, too.

Wellness can include developing healthy habits and routines and managing stress. Wellness has a way of promoting happiness. Small changes can affect your health in big ways. According to the Kim Foundation, an organization devoted to well-being and healthy living, it can take 21 days for something to become a habit and 90 days for it to become a lifestyle change.

The foundation's website (www.kimfoundation.org) also lists being mindful, practicing self-compassion, focusing on proper nutrition, and trying something new as ways to focus on wellness.

Starting small with things you enjoy and working on making them a habit results in wellness. For example, taking a yoga class, treating yourself to an in-home spa treatment, such as a soak in a tub of homemade bath salts, or learning to meditate, are all ways to start on a path to wellness.

Other things that lead to wellness include increasing your water intake and upping fruit and vegetable consumption. Cutting back on added sugar is another way to improve nutrition. The average American consumes 22 teaspoons of added sugar a day; this includes sugar in sodas, but also hidden sugar in salad dressings, condiments and bread. Walking is a simple and effective tool for stress management, as is gardening or any other form of physical activity, especially ones that get you outside interacting with nature.

Check your sleep habits — getting enough sleep so you feel rested and alert contributes to a sense of overall wellness and mental clarity. Spending time with family and friends also contributes to a state of wellness.

Finding a hobby, especially one not connected to your usual work, can also help develop a sense of wellness. For example, if your work is physical you might try a hobby that involves using your hands such as painting or woodworking.

Practicing the art of gratitude and reflecting on what you do have and focusing on the positive, rather than on the negative or what you don't have can affect one's mood and attitude for the good, which in turn will have a positive effect on overall wellness.

Doing volunteer work such as working at an animal shelter benefits both you and the animals. It releases "feel good" endorphins in the brain and the animals benefit from human companionship. And who knows? You might just meet your new best friend and a deserving pet will find their forever home.

Too much screen time can not only be bad for your eyes, but it can also be a real wellness damper if you are focusing on all the negativity on the news and social media. If you find yourself doing this, try limiting the time you spend watching TV and on your computer with social media.

Nothing helps one's wellness level like a treat such as lunch with a friend to catch up, a new book, a latte, a new hairstyle or a massage — special something that makes you feel good. Strive for wellness not only in August, but every month of the year.

■ Ann Bloom has worked for the OSU Extension Service for 15 years as a nutrition educator. She studied journalism and education at Washington State University. She lives in Enterprise.

Croak Ribbit Chirp Hoot



WENDY SCHMIDT
BETWEEN THE ROWSE

Humid days, the air you can wear, a chore to even breathe — that's the weather toads and frogs like best. The presence of toads and frogs is more noticeable at night, when you can hear their voices.

Toads and frogs eat lots of insects, so it's natural to want to attract them to the garden.

Many garden catalogs offer "toad houses" for sale. They resemble an inverted flowerpot with a hole for a door.

You can do just as well making your own toad house from an unglazed terra cotta pot. The terra cotta is porous and will breathe, as well as keeping some dampness. Evaporation keeps the pot cool. Set a rock over the drain hole. Chip a toad-size hole in the pot's rim.

Toads and frogs need to lay eggs in water. A pond or water feature will do. If you want tadpoles from the eggs, you can't have big fish unless you create a place for the tadpoles to hide.

To encourage the necessary humidity, lower leaves and branches should be left on your plants, especially in the shady areas toads and frogs love.

Also don't let the soil or plants dry out. Some large



The Virginian-Pilot-TNS

Ruth Wing holds an American bullfrog, *Lithobates catesbeianus*.

rocks sitting around fairly close to each other help trap moisture.

Besides being useful in

ridding gardens of insects, toads and frogs are environmental indicators. They are among the first species to

Attracting frogs and toads to your garden



Stephanie Yao/TNS
A boreal toad.

disappear if things turn toxic to life. Biologists and ecologists monitor the presence of frogs. If you see frogs, it's safe to assume that the environment is toxin-free. That may be why the sighting of frogs evoke smiles.

To summarize about attracting toads and frogs:

1. Water often.
2. Let plants be close and keep the lower branches and leaves to encourage humidity.
3. Encourage humidity with the use of mulch or rocks.
4. Have a water pool, even if only temporary in early spring.
5. If your pond has fish, add a brush pile half in and half out of the water at the edge.

Frogs are also a food source for animals. They fill the air with their peeps, trills, whistles, grunts, and snores. Their music adds dimension to our evenings. Try to learn the identity of a specific frog or toad by their song.

Enrich your garden by purposely attracting frogs and toads, and share your garden with other creatures by making it a habitat.

■ Wendy Schmidt is a longtime gardener. She lives in La Grande.

Want to beat the sunburn? Here's what works

Mayo Clinic News Network

Great summer days are full of relaxation, fun and plenty of sunshine. Unfortunately, spending too much time in the sun can lead to a sunburn. Your skin may be inflamed, painful and feel hot to the touch.

Any exposed part of the body, including your lips, earlobes and scalp, can burn. The symptoms of sunburn usually appear a few hours after sun exposure.

Unfortunately, there's no fast fix to soothe a sunburn. Once you have sunburn, the damage is done. After a few days, your body will begin to heal by peeling off the damaged skin's top layer. A bad burn can take several days to heal.

In the meantime, here are a few things you can do to treat sunburn and ease your discomfort:

- Keep skin cool and moist.
- Apply cold compresses, such as a towel dampened with cool water, to the affected skin several times a day. Or take a cool bath with baking soda. Apply aloe vera lotion, moisturizing cream or a nonprescription 1% hydrocortisone cream to the affected skin several times a day. Try cooling the product in the refrigerator before applying for extra-soothing comfort. Avoid products containing alcohol, which can further dry out skin.



Juan Moyano/Dreamstime-TNS

Unfortunately, there's no fast fix to soothe a sunburn. Once you have sunburn, the damage is done.

- Avoid products that contain benzocaine.
- Beware of sunburn treatment products containing anesthetics, such as benzocaine. There's little evidence that these products are effective. In some cases, they can irritate the skin. Benzocaine has been linked to a rare but serious, and sometimes deadly, condition that decreases the amount of oxygen that the blood can carry. Don't use benzocaine on children younger than age 2 without supervision from a health care professional, as this age group has been most affected. If you're an adult,

never use more than the recommended dose of benzocaine, and consider talking with your health care professional.

- Leave blisters alone.
- If blisters form, don't break them. Doing so only slows the healing process and increases the risk of infection. If needed, lightly cover blisters with gauze.
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever.

If needed, take anti-inflammatory medication, such as aspirin or ibuprofen, according to the label instructions until redness and pain subside. Don't give chil-

dren or teenagers aspirin. It may cause Reye's syndrome, a rare but potentially fatal disease.

- Treat peeling skin gently.
- Within a few days, the affected area may begin to peel. This is simply your body's way of getting rid of the top layer of damaged skin. While your skin is peeling, continue to use moisturizing cream.

- Drink extra water.

This helps prevent dehydration.

Talk with your health care team if your sunburn covers a large portion of your body with blisters, sunburn is accompanied by a high fever or severe pain, or severe sunburn doesn't begin to improve within a few days.

To prevent future episodes of sunburn, apply sunscreen frequently and liberally. Select a broad-spectrum product that provides protection against ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B radiation and has a sun protection factor of at least 15.

Be careful in the sun if you take medications that make sunburn more likely. A common example is tetracycline taken orally for acne. Finally, use common sense when outdoors. Cover up and stay in the shade as much as possible.

■ Trent Anderson, D.O., is a family medicine physician in Lake City and Plainview, Minnesota.