

Natural Support for the Dog Days of Summer

BY TRINITY SCHOOL OF NATURAL HEALTH



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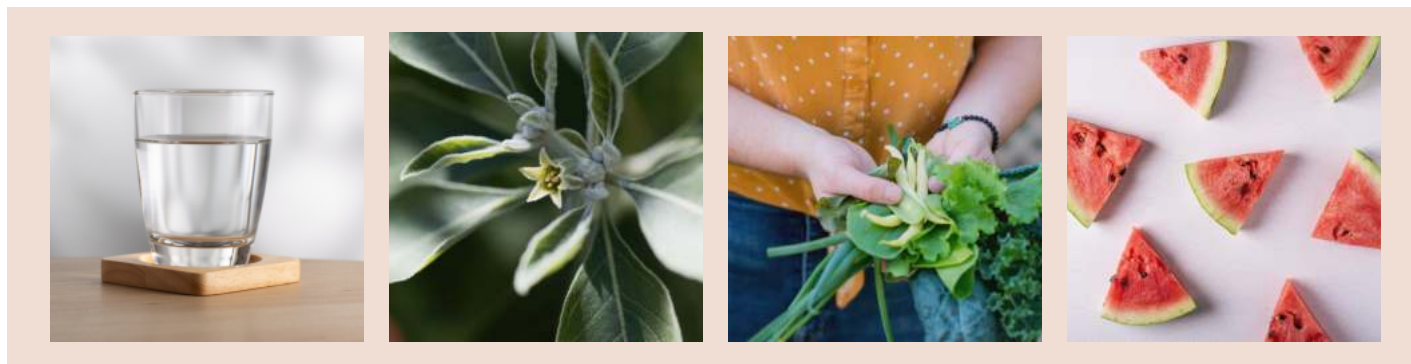
Summer is here, and a certain carefree excitement always comes with its onset. It's that time of year when the kids are home from school, and everyone is ready to enjoy summer vacations, outdoor barbeque, activities with family and friends, and soaking up the sun with longer days of light.

As summer wears on, the heat and high energy can take their toll on our health, especially as we go into summer's "dog days," for which July is commonly known. Day after day, exposure to high heat can affect our body systems and, over time, our ability to recover from stress. Being mindful of the need to support the body and aware of the best means to do so allows us to fully enjoy the season, free from the experience of chronic low energy and possible illness, which would keep us from enjoying those fun summer activities.

So, what can we do to stay healthy and get the most out of summer?

Ensure you're getting the hydration your body needs.

With summer heat comes sweat and increased thirst, and it's important to give the body the hydration it needs. In fact, one of the critical foundations for optimal health is hydrating the body to support the body's need for water in both its cellular chemical processes and its detoxification processes. The electrolyte minerals we sweat out of the body are also critical for cellular function.





Adding electrolytes to our purified water at times we are engaged in outdoor activities helps the body hydrate most efficiently as they maintain balanced water levels and move nutrients into cells while removing cellular waste. Electrolytes like sodium, potassium, chloride, magnesium, calcium,

phosphate, and bicarbonates also play an important role in the function of nerve signaling, muscular contraction and relaxation, as well as brain and heart activity, which is why it's so important to replenish electrolytes during the heat and sweat of summer.

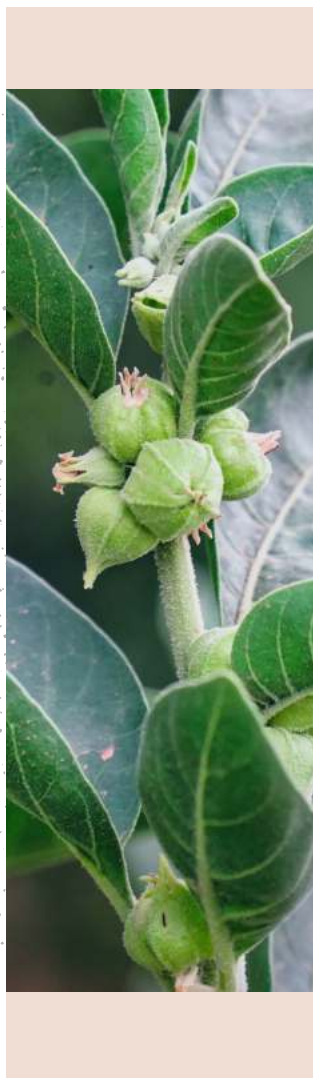
There are now many options for electrolyte powders and drinks on the market, and it may be difficult to know if these powders are safe and free of ingredients like sucralose or added sugars. A healthy refreshing way to get your minerals is to drink coconut water or slice up mineral-rich fruits and add them to a large pitcher of cold, purified water, like sliced oranges or even cucumber with a sprig of fresh mint.

Eat light and easy-to-digest foods.

There's nothing like a rich and heavy lunch to lull you into a need for an afternoon nap. Compound this effect with a sweltering afternoon, and there may be no way to avoid it. If we tune in to our body's seasonal needs, we may find that whole, nutrient-dense, easy-to-digest foods are our best bet for a steady energy supply that doesn't cause the digestive process to tax our energy reserves.

Water-dense fruits and colorful vegetables of the season are a great choice for their rich vitamin and mineral content. Some great choices include watermelons, cantaloupes, honeydew melons, apples, cherries, peaches, nectarines, colorful berries, key limes, apricots, grapes, avocados, cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, okra, beets, bell peppers, peas, lima beans, broccoli, and leafy greens. You can consult your Farmer's Almanac for the seasonal foods grown in your region. <https://www.farmersalmanac.com/calendar/fruits-vegetables-season>

Consider adaptogens to counteract mid-summer fatigue.



Adaptogenic herbs support the body to improve overall vital energy and resilience by helping it cope with stress and recover from its impact, allowing the body to maintain a naturally balanced and energized state. Adaptogens assist the body in its resistance to adverse conditions that stress and tax the body, as well as support the restoration of the body's healthy function to maintain homeostasis.

Although they are also great year-round support, adaptogens can offer the safe and natural support we need as the stress of high heat and added activities of summer begin to tax our energy and our sense of well-being. Since adaptogens support the vitality of multiple body systems, we can experience this broad-based benefit to help us stay healthy and thrive through the summer months.

Ashwagandha

In Sanskrit, the name ashwagandha means "smell of a horse," referring to this adaptogenic herb's offering of "the vigor and strength of a stallion."

Ashwagandha is regarded as a nervine tonic in Ayurvedic medicine. Not only does it improve the body's overall vital energy and resilience by mitigating the stress response, decreasing cortisol levels associated with chronic stress, and supporting the restoration of healthy adrenal function, but it also supports the overall normalizing of the sympathetic nervous system and is known for its grounding nature. Additionally, ashwagandha offers support in reducing insomnia and enabling restful sleep, as well as improving symptoms of anxiety and depression. Furthermore, it may improve cognitive function, including protecting against and even reversing neuro-degenerative decline, metabolic function, insulin sensitivity, and encourage optimal blood pressure.

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Rhodiola Rosea

Also known as rosen root or golden root, Rhodiola rosea is an adaptogenic herb that is shown not only to resist the effects of stress and support an increase in energy, stamina, and strength but also helps to manage depression and anxiety. Rhodiola's adaptogenic support offers an anti-fatigue effect that also supports improved mental performance and reduces the experience of burnout.

Eleuthero

Also known as Siberian ginseng, though it is not a true ginseng like the American or Korean Panax ginseng varieties, eleuthero offers a smooth yet stimulating boost of vitality and helps combat fatigue with an uplifting energy. It may also increase cardiovascular function and endurance, which is why summer athletes may benefit from its support.

Schizandra

Schizandra berry, also known as the "five-flavor fruit," is highly regarded in Chinese herbal medicine as a longevity, health, and beauty tonic and is shown to offer a broad spectrum of health support as an adaptogen. Schizandra offsets the stress response, decreases stress cortisol levels, and restores the healthy function of the adrenals. It's known to support increased endurance for athletes and reduce physical exhaustion. Schizandra can lessen the experience of anxiety and mental stress and protects the liver, lungs, and kidneys. It serves as an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, supporting the cardiovascular system.

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Holy Basil

Also known as tulsi, holy basil is highly revered as a health tonic and adaptogenic Ayurvedic herb that offers many benefits beyond promoting a sense of well-being and building resilience to the effects of stress. This herb is shown to reduce anxiety and depression while

increasing mental focus and memory with its positive impact on cognitive function. In addition, holy basil supports the immune system with its immunomodulatory effect and broad-spectrum antimicrobial activity. Research also points to its support of blood pressure and healthy blood glucose and lipid levels.

Caution should be used when considering herbal support if you are on any medication, are pregnant, or planning to become pregnant. It's best to consult your healthcare practitioner to identify what adaptogenic herb may work best for you and if there are contraindications with any current prescriptions.

For more information on herbs and the foundations of health that can support your wellness this summer and throughout the year, check out Trinity School of Natural Health or call an Enrollment Specialist at 800-428-0408, option 2.

This health article was written by Trinity Instructor and Enrollment Specialist Anya Connolly, MS, CHHP, CTN.

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