



Summer spirit, healthy body

Tracy Tredoux shares ways to enjoy the season while nourishing your body and mind

With summer finally here, you might be seeking advice on how to get into the spirit of the season — making the most of holidays, parties, social gatherings and the outdoors — while optimising rather than compromising your health. Tracy Tredoux, a qualified nutritional therapist and certified functional medicine practitioner, has some suggestions that might help.

After a long, cold winter in the Northern Hemisphere, Tracy emphasises that summer is a time to reconnect with nature, food, family, friends and ourselves. Modern life can pull us out of sync with nature's rhythms, but summer offers a perfect time to reset and realign. Early morning light resets our circadian clock, helping to regulate sleep and hormone function. Longer daylight hours encourage movement, play and time spent outdoors — simple acts that can benefit your mood, metabolism and immune system. And the foods of the season encourage eating fresh, lighter meals.

Sunshine, not just for the soul

One of the most powerful 'supplements' available to us in summer is free: sunlight. Tracy advocates sensible sun exposure (short bursts during early or late hours) which stimulates vitamin D production, crucial for bone health and immune regulation. Sunlight also boosts serotonin levels, helping to lift mood naturally.

Barbecue without the burn

Who doesn't love a great barbecue? But, before you fire up the grill, Tracy suggests tips to keep your health in the spirit too. High-heat cooking, like barbecuing, creates compounds called advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which have been linked to inflammation, oxidative stress and autoimmune conditions.

That doesn't mean you need to skip the barbecue altogether — just freshen it up. Balance grilled proteins with colourful,

antioxidant-rich sides: think fresh herb salads, vibrant greens, red peppers, citrus slices, cherry tomatoes and avocado. Add vitamin C, which contributes to the normal function of the immune system, and vitamin E, which could help protect cells. A squeeze of lemon or a handful of rocket might not look like medicine, but their impact on cellular health is real.

Drink light, feel light

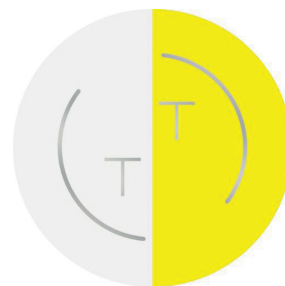
Alcohol often flows freely at summer gatherings, but instead of forcing yourself to go teetotal, it's smarter to sip with savvy. A good rule? Don't drink on an empty stomach. Include healthy fats (like olives or hummus) or a protein-rich snack to slow absorption and keep blood sugar steady. If you're skipping alcohol, sparkling water with lime, lemon and fresh mint is refreshing, hydrating and kind to your liver. If you still want a little something stronger, try a wine spritzer, a vodka and soda with fresh lime or a kombucha cocktail — lighter, lower-sugar choices that are easier on your gut and blood sugar.

Eat with the season

Nature offers a bounty in summer that's perfectly suited to how our bodies feel. Cooling fruits like watermelon and cucumber hydrate and replenish minerals. Bitter leaves like rocket and dandelion support liver detoxification. Berries are packed with polyphenols, which nourish the gut microbiome and reduce free radicals. The instinct to eat lighter in summer isn't just cultural — it's also biological.

The real spirit of summer? Slowing down

Beyond food and sunshine, summer offers something even more medicinal: the chance to slow down. Holidays, long weekends, outdoor meals — they all invite us to step off the treadmill of busyness and come back to what really matters. Health isn't just what we eat, but how we live: how much we rest, connect, breathe and enjoy. This summer, let the spirit be one of reconnection.



● tracytredoux.com

