Spring is a time for new beginnings. The fresh air and warmer weather make outdoor activities enjoyable again. Fresh spring produce starts to arrive on store shelves. It’s one of the best times of the year to renew your commitment to healthy living. Take advantage of the season to spring into better health.

**Enjoy the Fresh Air**
There’s more research than ever to show that regular moderate exercise can help maintain a healthy weight, reduce stress, boost the immune system and even protect against chronic diseases. Spring is a great time to get outside and get active to enjoy all the benefits of the season.

**Add Fresh Flavor**
Tarragon, parsley, dill and chives are all fresh for spring and are great ways to add flavor without adding salt. Try fresh tarragon with chicken or dill with fish. Parsley and chives can infuse a flavor boost to almost any favorite food, including fresh spring vegetables.

**Go Green**
Salad lovers rejoice – fresh greens make a spring salad crisp and flavorful. Spring also brings fresh asparagus, snow peas, broccoli, artichokes, watercress, spinach and collard greens to help you go green and get healthy.

**Get Naturally Sweet**
When we think fruit, we think summer. But springtime brings fresh strawberries, oranges, pineapples and apricots and other fruits in your region. Remember to look for what’s fresh for the season.

Choosing fresh can help you to get healthy and enjoy one of the best times of the year.

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**Know Your Numbers**
With the arrival of spring many of us begin thinking about shedding the extra pounds we may have gained over the winter. But weight is only one of the many numbers important to your health.

**Body Mass Index (BMI)**
Instead of just checking the scale this spring, learn your BMI. Body Mass Index is a number that combines your height and weight to give you an even better understanding for where you stand. Your BMI is actually very easy to calculate. Just go online to www.cdc.gov/bmi - all you’ll need is your height and weight.

**Calories**
How many calories are right for you? The number is actually different for everyone depending on your age, gender, height, weight and activity level. To see your number go to www.choosemyplate.gov and click on “weight management & calories”.

**Steps**
Experts recommend that we all take at least 10,000 steps a day. Setting a number goal can be a great way to get active this spring. Try wearing a pedometer to see if you’re stepping up to healthier habits.

**Your personal numbers**
Getting and staying healthy means knowing your numbers. Spring is a great time to get screened to check your blood pressure, cholesterol and other personal health statistics.

Know your numbers and talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian this spring to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.
**HEALTHY Lifestyles**

**Grow your own**
Gardening is the perfect spring activity. Creating your own vegetable garden is a great way to get healthy and save money. From urban community gardens in most major cities to the garden on the White House lawn, growing your own is gaining in popularity. For a successful vegetable garden of your own, start with a few basic tips.

**Choose wisely**
As you decide what to plant, choose vegetables that you will enjoy and that are easy to grow. Basic choices for beginners usually include tomatoes, summer squash, peppers, green beans and lettuce.

**Location, location, location**
You don’t need a large amount of space; you can use containers or your backyard. Choose a location that gets adequate sunshine, an average of six hours per day. Some vegetable varieties need more direct sunlight than others so if you’re locked into a partially shady area, choose leaf crops such as lettuce or spinach that can still thrive. Tomato plants need plenty of sunlight.

**Care and feeding**
Water and soil are keys to a successful vegetable garden. Be wary of too much of a good thing, avoid drowning your garden with water; once or twice a week or when the top inch of the soil is dry usually will suffice. Fertilize with compost, peat moss or leaf mold for nutrient rich soil. Also, be prepared for weeds and pests. Cover your soil with mulch to keep moisture in and minimize weeds. Reduce fungal diseases by watering soil directly without watering leaves. Caring for your garden can be fun and relaxing.

Garden with your friends and family. It’s a great way to be active and to get healthy together.

*Since everyone’s health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.*

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**Grilled Chicken Sandwich with Asian Slaw**

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients:**
- 4 (3-oz) whole-grain ciabatta rolls, split
- 4 (4-oz) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, grilled and chilled
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach
- ½ cup blanched, chilled fresh snow peas, cut diagonally in half
- **Asian Coleslaw:**
  - 1 Tbsp minced gingerroot
  - 1 Tbsp honey
  - ¼ tsp ground cayenne pepper
  - 1 Tbsp water
  - 1 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
  - ½ tsp salt
  - 2 c. thinly sliced Napa cabbage
  - ¼ cup shredded carrots
  - 2 Tbsp slivered red bell pepper
  - 2 Tbsp chopped cilantro leaves

**Preparation:**
In bowl, combine gingerroot, rice wine vinegar, honey and water. Add salt and ground cayenne pepper. Whisk until well blended. Add Napa cabbage, carrots, red bell pepper and cilantro leaves. Mix well. Chill.

For each sandwich:
Layer the following on bottom half of 1 ciabatta roll:
- ¼ cup snow peas
- ½ cup Asian Coleslaw
- 1 grilled chicken breast, sliced 1/8”
- ¼ cup spinach

Place top half of ciabatta roll. Cut diagonally in half. Serve immediately.