

The UConn Buzz



Forest Bathing

As the weather gets cooler and the leaves start to change color, autumn is a great time to be outside in Connecticut. The benefits of being out in nature reach far beyond just its beauty. Shinrin-yoku, meaning taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing, became part of Japan's national health program in 1982. Since then there have been many laboratory and field studies conducted to learn about the healing nature of nature. [One study found](#) that "the mood of the respondents were significantly improved on the day of the forest visit compared to the control day." A [study](#) published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, found that people who walked for 90 minutes in a natural area, showed decreased activity in a region of the brain associated with a key factor in depression. This [study](#) showed that spending time outdoors can help boost problem-solving skills & attention span, and was a great way to stay healthy and get those creative juices flowing. [Another study looked](#) into the physiological effects of being surrounded by trees. They found that by walking through the woods, the participants inhaled phytoncides. The smelling of these phytoncides (think tree essential oils) resulted in decreased blood pressure, stimulation of the nervous system, and

improved productivity & concentration. A [2009 study](#) showed significant increases in human natural killer cell function, and improved immune function. The natural killer cells are white blood cells that "play a major role in the host-rejection of both tumor and virally infected cells[1]."

. Roitt I, Brostoff J, Male D (2001). Immunology (6th ed.), 480p. St. Louis: Mosby



Forest bathing should not to be confused with hiking. The point of forest bathing is to just spend time amongst the trees. Even in many urban settings you will be able to find enough greenery to get your dose of nature.

Choose a location based on your physical ability. This route should not be too strenuous, and rest when necessary. Try to spend at least 4 hours in the woods. This can be done alone, or with groups

and some people use this time to practice mindfulness.

[The Connecticut Forest & Park Association](#) has teamed up with Alexandra Lowry, a member of the Association of Nature & Forest Therapy Guides, Certified CFPA Ramble Guide & Certified Integrative Life Coach to offer a series of both presentations and rambles.

If you want to strike out on your own there are many great trails and parks in our area. Here are some resources to help you find one near you:

- [Joshua's Trust](#)
- [The Last Green Valley](#)



Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.



HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

SAPTA 5K - Sat. Oct. 7, 11am. UConn Campus, 1376 Storrs Rd, (Rain date Oct. 8). This event is sponsored by the UConn Student American Physical Therapy Association.

Mansfield Hollow Cyclocross - Sat. Oct. 7, times, distance & age groups vary. 147 Bassett's Bridge, Mansfield. Cyclocross courses feature pavement, wooded trails, grass, steep hills & obstacles requiring the rider to quickly dismount, carry the bike while navigating the obstruction and remount. Prices vary.

UConn Work Life Health Fair - Thurs. Oct. 12. UConn Human Resources will be offering a flu clinic and other health/wellness resources at this event.

Tackle the Trail - Sat. Oct. 21, 9am. Pomfret to Willimantic. Open to individuals and up-to-5 person relay teams, this 20 mile chipped time trail race. Price varies.

Huskies Forever 5K & Lil' Huskies Kid K - Sun. Oct. 22, 7am. UConn Campus, 2384 Alumni Dr. Open to all: experienced runners, leisurely joggers, & walkers are all invited to the fourth annual Huskies Forever 5K. Price varies.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE TEAL PUMPKIN PROJECT?

Halloween can be very dangerous for kids with food allergies.

The [Teal Pumpkin Project](#) is trying to make sure all children can enjoy Halloween. Putting a teal pumpkin on your doorstep means you have non-food treats available for the children that visit your house this Halloween

[Click here](#) for some ideas for non-food treats to give out.

Use the [Teal Pumpkin Project Map](#) to find participating houses in your neighborhood. If you are willing to be a part of the project you can add your house to the list as well.



APPLE DUMPLINS

- ◆ 2 Tbsp firmly packed light brown sugar
- ◆ 6 small apples, peeled and cored
- ◆ 6 square 7-inch egg roll wrappers
- ◆ Non-stick cooking spray
- ◆ 1-1/2 tsp cinnamon
- ◆ 1 tsp cornstarch
- ◆ 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ◆ 1 Tbsp water

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray six muffin cups with non-stick cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine the sugar, cinnamon, cornstarch, vanilla & water.

Roll peeled apples in the mixture until coated. Place one apple in the center of each egg roll wrapper. Bring the corners up to the top of the apple, pressing & folding to seal the edges. Place each dumpling in a muffin cup and lightly spray the tops with non-stick cooking spray.

Bake until golden, about 20 minutes. Cool on a rack 15 minutes; serve warm



Sources: Center for Disease Control & Prevention, CT Forest & Park Association, National Institute of Health, Public Library of Science, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, Eastern Highlands Health District.

Halloween Safety

As you get ready for Halloween we at Be Well want you to stay safe. Eating too much candy can be unhealthy and give you a stomach ache but there are other dangers to think about as well.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has tips to make trick-or-treating safe. You can see all the tips and learn by visiting: www.cdc.gov/family/halloween.

Costume

Your child will be doing a lot of walking in this costume. Be sure it fits well. If the costume is too big the child may trip on it. Try the costume on in the store before you purchase it.

Use a flashlight and add reflective tape or items to the bag/costume to help

drivers see you. It will start to get darker earlier as we move toward daylight savings time.

Swords, knives, and other toy weapons should be short, soft and flexible.

Face paint can cause irritation to your child's skin. Test the paint before you use it by applying a small amount to the skin a few days before and check for any irritation or rash.

Cars

Children can get very excited to run from house to house and forget about basic safety. It is best to walk in groups, and cross at green lights.

Be alert for drunk drivers. According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)

[\(NHTSA\)](#) "Halloween is one of the most dangerous nights due to combination of alcohol and increased pedestrian traffic. In 2012, almost half (48%) of all crash fatalities on Halloween involved a drunk driver compared to 31 percent on an average day that year. More than one-quarter (28%) of Halloween crash fatalities were pedestrians, compared to 14 percent on an average day.

If you find yourself driving this Halloween, be sure to slow down and be alert in residential areas. Be careful entering and exiting your driveway, and eliminate any distractions.

