



Study Guide

**Consumer Decision Making
2025-2027**

Athletic Wear

ATHLETIC WEAR

4-H Consumer Decision Making
Study Guide



Activewear

The activewear industry has witnessed significant growth in recent years, reflecting the increasing importance of sports and fitness in people's lives. With a worldwide market size of 303.44 billion in 2021, this sector shows no signs of slowing down. What began as clothing specifically designed for athletic pursuits has evolved into a diverse range of garments suitable for various physical activities. Today, activewear encompasses attire for sports and exercise and everyday routines that incorporate fitness elements. This surge in demand demonstrates the changing preferences and lifestyles of consumers who seek both comfort and functionality in their clothing choices. As the market continues to expand, the activewear industry is ready to offer a wide array of options to cater to the evolving needs and preferences of individuals worldwide.

Activewear or Sportswear is any apparel, including shoes, worn for physical activity or participation in sports. The fabrics and materials used in activewear are engineered to achieve the desired attributes for a particular activity. When selecting activewear, it is important to consider the type of activity you will participate in, activity impact level, your body type and if you will be using it indoors or outdoors. The right active wear can enhance your training and performance.

Brand-name activewear, including Under Armor, Nike, and Adidas, is popular with teens and adults. Private-label brands available in department and discount stores might be made of similar materials but cost less than the national brands.

CLOTHING

The right clothing can enhance your training and performance. Fabric and fit are most important when choosing clothing for specific sports or activities. Choose activewear that contains cotton, cotton blends and moisture wicking fabrics that will assist with moisture absorbency, ventilation, and comfort.

FABRIC

Fabrics are designed for different purposes. Some fabrics pull sweat away from your skin and others absorb it. When it comes to workout clothes, some choices are better than others on your workout.

Fabrics with wicking characteristics:

Wicking fabrics are breathable synthetic fabrics that provide moisture control for an athlete's skin during a mid to high intensity workout. The fabric "wicks" the sweat away from your skin which can help it evaporate quickly and keep your body cool.

Wicking fabrics tend to be soft, lightweight, and stretchy, making them an excellent choice for activewear. This broad category of fabrics is used to make garments like t-shirts, running and cycling jerseys, socks, and polo style shirts for any physical activity where the goal is to keep your skin as cool and dry as possible.

Moisture wicking fabrics are used to make apparel for outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, mountain biking, snow skiing and mountain climbing.

There are products marketed for their wicking. Several fabrics are known for their wicking properties. Here are some common fabrics that offer wicking:

Polyester: Polyester fabrics are widely used in athletic and outdoor apparel due to their excellent moisture-wicking properties. They quickly pull moisture away from the skin and allow it to evaporate, keeping you dry during physical activities.

Nylon: Nylon is another synthetic fabric that offers good wicking properties. It is often blended with other fibers to enhance its moisture-wicking capabilities.

Merino Wool: Merino wool is a natural fiber known for its exceptional moisture-wicking properties. It can absorb a significant amount of moisture while still feeling dry to the touch. Additionally, merino wool has the advantage of being odor resistant.

Bamboo: Bamboo fabric, derived from bamboo pulp, has gained popularity for its softness and moisture-wicking abilities. It absorbs moisture from the body and allows it to evaporate quickly, making it a comfortable choice for activewear and undergarments.

Microfiber: Microfiber fabrics are made from extremely fine synthetic fibers, usually polyester or nylon. They have a high surface area, which helps in efficient moisture transport and quick drying.

Synthetic Blends: Many moisture-wicking fabrics are blends of different synthetic fibers. For example, a polyester/spandex blend can provide both moisture-wicking properties and stretch for enhanced comfort during physical activities.

It is important to note that the specific construction and treatment of the fabric, such as the addition of moisture-wicking finishes or mesh panels, can also affect the wicking performance. When selecting clothing for activities that involve sweating or moisture exposure, look for garments labeled as "moisture-wicking," "quick-dry," or "performance fabric" to ensure optimal comfort.

Cotton: Lacks the wicking properties that are found in other fabrics but can still be a good choice when choosing activewear. Cotton is breathable, soft, comfortable, and a natural fiber that works well for lighter workouts. Cotton also tends to be less expensive than synthetic activewear. However, cotton is very absorbent and is slow to dry. When wet, cotton holds the moisture next to your body.

FIT

Choose activewear that fits your body and your workout. For example, if you are running or biking, avoid wide-leg or loose pants/leggings. Likewise, for activities such as yoga or Pilates, choose stretchy, fitted fabrics. Additionally, avoid fabrics that could chafe or irritate your skin during repetitive movement.

Pay close attention to fit more than size because some workout clothes tend to run smaller and more from fitting than regular clothes.

COST

There are many factors to consider when shopping for activewear. You may be surprised at how much activewear costs. Paying the top dollar does not necessarily mean that you will get the best activewear for you. Be sure that whatever price you choose to pay for activewear it is the right activewear for you and that it meets the needs you desire.

ATHLETIC SHOES

With the many types of athletic shoes that are available, it can be hard to choose the right shoes for you. There are differences in design and variations in material and weight. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons says that these differences have been developed to protect the areas of the feet that encounter the most stress in a particular athletic activity. Let's review some of the several types of sports shoes available.

Athletic shoes

Athletic shoes are grouped into the following categories: **running, training, and walking**; they include shoes for hiking, jogging, and exercise walking. These shoes should have a comfortable soft upper, good shock absorption, smooth tread, and a rocker sole design that encourages the natural roll of the foot during the walking motion.

Running Shoes

Running and walking shoes might look similar, but there are significant differences. Traditional running shoes provide extra cushioning, because landing can generate a force of 1½ to 3 times your body weight. They should also provide easy flexing at the ball of the foot and enough stability. The outsoles should be durable and provide good traction on pavement or dirt. Features of a good jogging shoe should include cushioning, flexibility, control, and stability in the heel counter area, lightness, and good traction.

Be aware that longer distances typically call for more support. A shoe worn to run sprints is typically a lightweight minimalist shoe worn for its quick feedback and responsiveness. While a marathon shoe has much more cushioning and support for the longer runs. As a rule of thumb an increase in distance and or time on your feet calls for more cushion and support. Nurses typically wear marathon shoes as they must be on their feet all day moving around.

Cross-Trainers

Cross-trainers are all-purpose shoes that bridge walking shoes and sport-specific shoes like tennis or basketball shoes. They can be a money-saving alternative to several pairs of specialized shoes for people who pursue a variety of activities, but they don't provide the same flexibility or cushioning for running or other high-impact sports. A good cross trainer should have flexibility in the forefoot that you need for running, in addition to stability on the inside and outside of the shoe for the control needed for aerobics and tennis.

Walking Shoes

These are best for people who walk for fitness or who want casual shoes for everyday walking. They should provide enough cushioning to be comfortable. And their flexible soles, designed for the relatively low impact of walking, allow the foot to roll easily from heel to toe. Walking shoes should flex easily at the ball of the foot, which helps feet to push forward.

Sport Specific Shoes

Court sport shoes

Include shoes for tennis, basketball, and volleyball. Most court sports require the body to move forward, backward, and side-to-side. As a result, most athletic shoes used for court sports are subjected to heavy abuse. The key to finding a good court shoe is the sole. Another key factor is grip. A shoe worn for tennis must grip onto the clay surface while a basketball shoe must grip onto a hardwood court. You should ask a coach or shoe salesperson to help you select the best type of shoe for your sport.

Field sport shoes

Include shoes for soccer, football, and baseball. These shoes are cleated, studded, or spiked. The spike and stud formations vary from sport to sport, but they generally are replaceable or detachable cleats, spikes, or studs affixed into nylon soles. Soccer cleats are lightweight allowing the user to reach maximum speed and agility. Football and baseball cleats are heavier weight allowing the user to grip onto the turf/dirt field. Football and baseball cleats also have more spikes than soccer cleats allowing them to maintain a better grip

Track and field sport shoes

Are very specific to the sport. The needs of the individual are most important when picking the shoe. For example, foot types, gait patterns, and training styles should always be considered. It is always best to ask a coach about the type of shoe that should be selected for the event in which you are participating. Proper fitting sports shoes can enhance performance and prevent injuries.

Follow these specially designed fitting facts when purchasing a new pair of athletic shoes:

- Try on athletic shoes after a workout or run and at the end of the day. Your feet will be at their largest.
- Wear the same type of sock that you will wear for that sport.
- When the shoe is on your foot, you should be able to freely wiggle all your toes. There should be a thumb's width from the tip of the toe to the end of the shoe.
- The shoes should be comfortable as soon as you try them on. There is no break-in period. If they are not comfortable in the store, they will not be comfortable when you are exercising.
- Walk or run a few steps in the shoes. They should be comfortable. The heel of the shoe should not slip off the foot as you walk or run.
- Always re-lace the shoes you are trying on. You should lace through each top eyelet as you crisscross the lacing pattern to ensure a snugger fit and decrease slippage. Do not tie the laces too tight as this may cause injury to the nerves or tendons on the top of the foot and ankle.
- There should be a firm grip of the shoe to your heel. Your heel should not slip as you walk or run.

Athletic Shoe Features

Like other products, it is important to know the different parts and features of the shoe. This way you can appropriately identify the parts of the shoe and feel confident in knowing what you are purchasing.

The Sole

Three layers comprise the sole. The bottom layer, or outsole, is generally made of carbon rubber for durability. It is segmented for flexibility and grooved or patterned for traction. The squishy middle layer, or midsole, provides most of the cushioning. It is usually made of shock-absorbing foam and might incorporate gel or air sacs and plastic torsion supports. The layer directly underfoot, the insole or sock liner, provides some additional shock absorption and arch support. It is removable and washable in many running and walking shoes.

The Upper

This is the body of the shoe, the part above the sole. The toe box—the forward part of the upper—should be roomy enough to let your toes spread and leave a half-inch space ahead of your longest toe. The heel counter at the rear should keep your heel from slipping excessively. These days, the uppers on most running shoes are made of synthetics, though some walking shoes still use leather. The more your feet sweat, the more you will appreciate the breathability of mesh. But if you plan to be outside in the cold weather, a less porous material will provide a little more protection.

Lacing

Fabric, plastic, or metal speed-lacing loops make tightening easier. Extra top eyelets provide a snug fit at the ankle. Flat laces are less likely to loosen or come untied than round ones.

Style

If you are on your feet a lot all day long, you might want shoes that combine the comfort and support of a walking shoe with something dressy enough for the office. Unfortunately, the dressier walking shoes tested in the past did not perform as well, overall, as the ones that look like sneakers.

Reflectors

If you jog or walk at dawn or dusk, reflective tabs on the uppers can provide extra safety by reflecting cars' headlights. The reflector should be as big as possible, especially if you will be outside at dusk or dawn.

Heel to Drop

Also known as the Shoe Offset, Heel differential, or HTD. The HTD refers to the height difference between the heel and the forefoot of an athletic shoe. It is measured from the base of the heel and the middle point of the forefoot. It is measured in millimeters in running shoes. In general, a 0mm drop is called natural or barefoot running. Low drop shoes are common for trail running. The most common drop range for most running shoes is 10-12mm. A shoe with a higher drop will be easier on the lower leg, foot, ankle, Achilles, and calf while directing more stress to the knees and hips. A lower-drop shoe will typically spare the knees but put more stress on the lower leg.

Low Drop-Trail Running	1-4mm
Mid Drop- Minimalist Running	5-8mm
High Drop-Running/ Long Distance	8+mm

Pricing

In addition to being overwhelmed by all the choices of athletic shoes, you may be surprised at how much they cost. Slick ads and television commercials tout technological features, the latest gimmicks, and shoes named after sports celebrities. Paying more than \$100 does not necessarily get you a better shoe. Good quality shoes may be pricey, but don't overlook the less expensive shoes because they can outperform their costlier brandmates. Be sure that whatever price you decide to pay for the shoes, it's because the shoe has the features that meet your needs—not because it is a certain brand or has a sports celebrity's name on it.

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Bedding

(Pillows)



Bedding

- bedsheets (2023-2025)
- pillows (2025-2027)
- mattresses (2027-2029)

Support for your head, neck, and shoulders is the purpose of a pillow. The right pillow ensures that your head, neck and shoulders stay aligned with your spine, thus decreasing the amount of pressure on your body. Proper spine alignment makes a difference in not only how well you sleep, but also how likely you are to wake without aches and pains. Research shows that different pillow types and the materials used offer a range of support and comfort for each individual's need.

SLEEPING POSITIONS

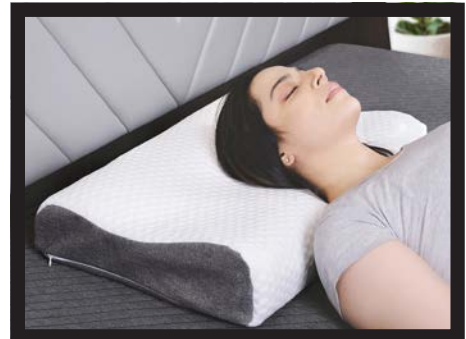
BACK SLEEPERS

There are four elements that should be considered when exploring pillows – sleeping position, size, shape and materials. First, when selecting a pillow, you should consider your sleeping position. Whether you sleep on your back, side, or stomach will affect the position of your spine and how much support your head and neck will need while you rest. You can select or adjust a pillow's size, height, and firmness to accommodate the position you usually sleep in. Below is a list of the best types of pillows based on your dominate sleeping position:

BACK SLEEPERS

For back sleepers, it is crucial to find a pillow that will provide support for the natural curve of your neck. One option is a cervical pillow. A cervical pillow is higher in the bottom and the top thirds of the pillow with a featured slope third down in the center where your head lies.

Another option is a standard pillow that is not too high -- just medium to thin in height -- that will provide the much-needed support for your head while maintaining the appropriate angle of your neck. If using a standard pillow, back sleepers also need a pillow with a medium firmness. This also helps to maintain the head's proper alignment with the spine. The medium firmness of your pillow will also prevent the pillow from becoming too flat while you sleep. One option that fits this need is a memory foam pillow as this type will shape itself around your head and neck.

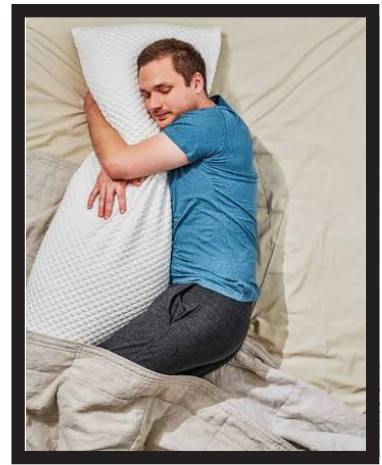


SIDE SLEEPERS

SIDE SLEEPERS

Side sleeping-- or sleeping in a fetal position or straight on your side -- is the preferred sleeping position for most people. This position requires significant support in both heighth, as well as the

firmness of the pillow in order to achieve healthy sleep. Side sleepers need to use a pillow that offers about 4 to 6 inches of height. This helps to keep your nose aligned with your sternum, therefore filling the space between your ear and outer shoulder. The result is less neck strain because you are maintaining more proper posture and spinal alignment during sleep. Side sleeper might also consider body pillows. The purpose of a body pillow is to provide support for both your pelvis and hips.



Regarding firmness, a pillow with moderate to heavy firmness is recommended by the experts for side sleepers. When looking for firm pillows, it is important to consider pillows that are filled with materials like buckwheat hulls, memory foam, and latex as these tend to be firmer. It should be noted that down pillows are typically softer unless densely packed.

STOMACH SLEEPERS

STOMACH SLEEPERS

If you sleep on your stomach, it will be important for you to evaluate on which body parts you actually sleep. As with all types of sleeping positions, maintaining good spinal alignment while you sleep is crucial. Sleeping on your stomach puts extra stress on the spine, muscles of the back and shoulders. As a matter of fact, most physicians will advise people with back pain against sleeping on their stomach.

Stomach sleepers should seek a pillow that is softer with a lower height. Down and feather fill tends to be less firm than other materials and may be compressed to a comfortable height.

Not everyone considered a stomach sleeper actually sleeps directly on their stomach. Some stomach sleepers actually sleep half on their stomach and half on their side. Others may sleep with their arms tucked under their stomach. Therefore, for stomach sleepers, it is recommended using a body pillow for extra support. By positioning yourself around a body pillow, you may give yourself a feeling to similar to that of sleeping on your stomach. However, the use of the body pillow allows you to arrange your head and neck so that they can comfortably align with your shoulders and hips.

OTHER ELEMENTS

PILLOW SHAPE

SHAPE

It would make sense that a most pillows are shaped in a rectangular form in order to fit perfectly onto different-sized mattresses. There are standard pillows, queen pillows, jumbo pillows, and king-sized pillows, that are each designed specifically to fit the width of twin, full, queen, or king-sized

mattresses. Other shaped pillows are considered specialty pillows which are created to help maintain proper body alignment while sleeping. These specialty-shaped pillows include cervical or neck pillows that have rounded corners contoured to fit the head and neck and longer body pillows that can provide support from the head down past the hips.

PILLOW SIZE

SIZE

As noted in the prior section on pillow shape, pillow size refers to how much space the pillow takes up when it is placed on top of a mattress. This is one part of “size.” The other part of “size” refers to the loft. Loft is defined as how high or thick the pillow is. It is pillow loft that has a direct effect on how much support is provided to the head and neck -- a very important factor in maintaining proper spine alignment and attempting to prevent or alleviate neck or back pain.

PILLOW FILL

FILL

Another important factors to consider when choosing a pillow is material fill. Material fill is defined as the type of material a pillow is filled with will determine its loft and firmness, as well as temperature. . Different materials can influence how well you body regulates temperature during sleep in a variety of ways. One of the negative aspects of poor fill selecton might result in sleeping too warmly. A lower body temperature tends to correlate with better quality sleep. Pillows made of fill materials -- accompanied with the use of pillowcases that are made from a breathable fabric -- can lower a sleeper’s body temperature and reduce the likelihood of sweating during sleep.

Pillow fill also needs to be considered for those persons who suffer with allergies or who are sensitive to certain materials. Pillow protectors are a smart idea to consider and purchase. Pillow protectors will protecct your pillows from potential allergens like dust mites and keep them clean longer.

There are a variety of materials that can be used to fill pillows. Along with considerations of firmness, allergens, and temperature, you may need to look at affordability and availability. Below is a list of common pillow fillers:



DOWN

Down fill comes from the underlayer feathers of waterfowl. The fluffy, lightweight material is soft and can quickly flatten. It, therefore, provides a low loft profile for those that don’t need much support, but needs to be fluffed. They are considerable durable and help keep sleepers warm.



FEATHERS

Feathers come from the back and wing feathers of ducks and geese. Feather pillows are flatter than down and include the quill. Feather pillows are also more affordable than down pillows. They easily fold to accommodate different sleeping positions. Overall, they are more breathable and firmer than down pillows, and may hold less heat.



MEMORY FOAM

Memory foam pillows are typically constructed with a polyurethane foam. It is specifically designed to conform to the head or shift to accommodate a person's movement during sleep. Memory foam can be denser and less breathable than other materials, which may make it harder to stay cool.



POLYESTER

Polyester pillow fill is the most economical choice. It's also the most common type of pillow fill. However, dust mites like to live in synthetic pillow fills such as polyester. If you have certain allergies, you may want to avoid this type of fill.



LATEX

Latex is a hypoallergenic and durable option. It can be synthetic or a natural material created from the sap of rubber trees. Latex pillows can be heavier and firmer, and bounces back quickly to its original shape. It also helps in sleeping cooler.



BUCKWHEAT

Buckwheat pillow fill is made of buckwheat hulls -- the hard, outer shells of buckwheat seeds. This filler is known for its firmness, breathability and adjustability as you can add or remove the hulls to increase or decrease thickness and support. Buckwheat also tends to be better for maintaining a cool body temperature.

FREQUENCY of PURCHASE

FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE

Think about it! Your pillows get a lot of wear and tear over time. They won't last forever -- no matter what kind of pillow you choose. Experts recommend replacing your pillow every two years. A high-quality memory foam pillow may last about three years. In some instances, you may need to replace your pillow more often.

How do you know that you need a new pillow? It's important to closely examine your pillow on a regular basis. Look for signs of aging, including:

- Stains
- Odors
- Physical wear and tear
- Loss of shape

If your pillow has even one of these signs, it's time to replace it. Keeping a pillow for too long isn't a good idea. Not only do old pillows not provide the support needed for good sleep, but also things such as mold, dead skin cells, and dust mites populate in old pillows and need to be thrown out.

SHOPPING for a NEW PILLOW

SHOPPING FOR A NEW PILLOW

You can purchase pillows in many different specialty retail, brick-and-mortar and big box stores, as well as online. Before shopping, do your research first to identify what type of sleeper you are, pillow size and shape preferences and if you have any special needs. Keep in mind that studying product descriptions and understanding how a pillow is constructed and what it is made from is crucial if you are shopping online. Online shopping, while convenient, prevents your ability to touch, feel, test and examine the pillow.

There are some steps you can take (when shopping in person) to find one that suits your needs.



TEST THE FIRMNESS OF THE PILLOW:

Place the pillow on a flat surface. Press it with your palm until it's half its original thickness. A firm pillow will require more pressure than a soft pillow.



FLUFF THE PILLOW:

If a pillow is made of small pieces of material inside of it instead of a single solid piece, it can lose its shape. To test it, fluff the pillow to see if it returns to its original shape. A pillow with an even shape and fill is generally considered more comfortable for sleep.



EXAMINE THE OUTSIDE COVER:

Choose a pillow that is well constructed and without holes and frays and featuring a quality fabric. This will reduce wear and tear and help the pillow last longer.

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Beverage Appliances

Brewing Coffee

Dental Products

FCS CONSUMER DECISION MAKING STUDY GUIDE



TOOTHBRUSHES AND FLOSS

Brushing your teeth is a vital part of a daily routine that our parents teach us from a young age. But there's one lesson many of us have yet to learn from our parents or dentists: how to choose the right toothbrush.

Have you ever stopped to think about how to choose the best toothbrush? It is such an everyday item that most people have not. They either use the toothbrush their dentist provided or select one based on color or price. Every store has many different toothbrush options, and it can be overwhelming. It is essential to consider the most important factors before choosing a toothbrush to ensure good dental health.

While brushing correctly daily is the most important consideration, your toothbrush matters. New toothbrushes have been shown to remove 30% more plaque than older ones. Dentists recommend purchasing a new toothbrush or replacing the brush head on an electric toothbrush every three months or when the bristles show wear to maintain good oral hygiene and dental care. Always look for specific features best suited to your unique dental needs and dentist recommendations.

Manual or Electric: Which One Should I Use?

Manual toothbrushes have been on the market for years, but electric toothbrushes are increasing in popularity. The good news is it doesn't matter which type of toothbrush you use; as long as you brush your teeth effectively twice a day for two minutes using fluoride toothpaste, the effect on your oral health is the same.

Electric and manual toothbrushes each have multiple benefits. As long as the American Dental Association (ADA) has placed the seal of approval on the toothbrush, it is safe and effective.

Electric Toothbrushes

Electric toothbrushes can be powered by a rechargeable or removable battery that, when turned on, has rotating, moving, or vibrating bristles that clean the plaque as you move the toothbrush across your teeth and gum line. The vibrations allow for micro-movements as you move the brush through the mouth.

Electric toothbrushes clean teeth and gums much better than manual toothbrushes, according to a study by the



Oral Health Foundation. Scientists found that people who use an electric toothbrush have healthier gums, less tooth decay, and keep their teeth longer than those who use a manual toothbrush. The following factors should be considered if you are considering an electric toothbrush.

Types of Electric Toothbrushes:



- **Oscillating rotary toothbrushes.** These toothbrushes have small circular heads that rotate back and forth to clean each tooth. Some models combine this rotating feature with vibrating and pulsing to help dislodge more plaque. Studies have indicated that oscillating toothbrushes are the most effective at removing plaque.
- **Sonic toothbrushes.** Sonic toothbrushes have vibrating brush heads that move bristles side-to-side at high speeds. To be classified as a sonic toothbrush, the vibration has to be fast enough to produce an audible hum. Sonic toothbrushes today offer frequencies up to over 50,000 movements per minute.
- **Ultrasonic toothbrushes.** Instead of relying on physical motion to clean your teeth, ultrasonic

toothbrushes use a high frequency of vibration called ultrasound to remove plaque and food debris.

Ultrasound generates waves at a frequency beyond human hearing, and existing ultrasonic toothbrushes use operating frequencies from 20 kHz up to 10 MHz, according to Dentistry Journal. Though ultrasonic brushes can break up plaque without movement, most models also provide a sonic vibration to remove plaque and food debris remnants further.

Things to Consider Before Purchasing:

1 Cost

Electric toothbrushes are more expensive than manual ones and range in price from \$25 for a model with replaceable batteries to more than \$250 for a model with rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, multiple brushing modes, Bluetooth connectivity, and other features. In addition to the initial expense of an electric toothbrush, you will need to replace the removable toothbrush head as often as you replace your manual toothbrush.

Toothbrush heads range in price from \$5 to \$30, depending on the brand and number in the pack. Not all stores carry the same brand, so you might have issues finding the head to match your toothbrush, especially when you travel.

2 Bristle Stiffness

When a toothbrush is labeled "extra soft," "soft," "medium," or "hard," this relates to bristle stiffness. The ADA advises brushing with soft bristles because stiff bristles can damage and remove enamel and root surfaces.

3 Timer

If you're thinking about an electric toothbrush, one feature to consider is a 2-minute timer. According to the ADA, most people brush for an average of only 45 seconds, so a timer may encourage you to brush longer. Many newer toothbrushes include a timer to help you make sure that you are brushing your teeth as long as you should be.

You probably know that you should brush your teeth for at least 2 minutes, but did you know that the average time most people brush their teeth is less than a minute? This could be a massive advantage if you are one of those people. Some brushes will buzz and beep every 30 seconds to remind you to spend equal time brushing all quadrants of your mouth.

4 Cleaning Modes

Toothbrushes are equipped with a variety of modes that meet every need. Modes will vary per toothbrush, with the default mode being Clean. Other brushing modes that may be found on electric toothbrushes are:

- **Deep Clean:** allows extra time to work on trouble spots
- **Whitening:** works to remove surface stains
- **Polish:** smooths the surface layer of your teeth
- **Gum Care:** Cleans and massages your gums. Best for those with sore, inflamed, or bleeding gums.
- **Sensitive:** gentle vibrations perfect for sensitive teeth
- **Tongue Care:** cleans the tongue

The extra modes allow for customization of your brushing experience to best suit your needs. It is better to have a toothbrush with one cleaning mode that you use regularly and correctly than to have a brush with multiple modes you may not use. The evidence that extra modes significantly benefit dental health care is limited.



5 Pressure Sensor

Placing too much pressure on your teeth doesn't help remove more plaque; instead, you are probably harming your teeth and irritating your gums. A pressure sensor will let you know you are using too much pressure and will use a light indicator, buzzer, or beeper as an indicator. Some models will even slow the rotating speed if you brush too hard.

6 Range of Motion

Older adults, especially those with arthritis, might not have the dexterity to maneuver a manual toothbrush, but an electric toothbrush will do the work for them and have a more oversized handle, making them much easier to hold.

Kids often have an easier time using an electric toothbrush as well. Some toothbrushes, designed explicitly for kids, will play music or connect to timer apps to encourage longer brushing sessions.

An electric toothbrush can also be a plus for anyone with braces. Since the brush head moves faster, it's easier to dislodge any trapped food or bacteria without any complicated maneuvers. Brush heads may be purchased that are designed specifically for people with braces.

7 Battery Life

The life of an electric toothbrush depends on how often it's used and the type of battery in the toothbrush.

- **Alkaline Batteries:** Depending on the battery, these should last 4-6 weeks.
- **NiMH Rechargeable Batteries:** Can last up to two weeks on a full charge.
- **Lithium-Ion Batteries:** Full charge can last more than two weeks.

Using your electric toothbrush twice a day for 2 minutes each, the rechargeable battery will last about three years before it will need replacing. If you use it once daily for the same amount of time, the battery should last about five years before needing replacement. So, the average life span is between three to five years before they stop working or require a replacement.

Some brushes will last longer, depending on the care and use of the toothbrush. Keeping the toothbrush off the charging stand at night and only charging when the battery light indicates will save electricity and maximize operational life.

Most electric toothbrushes offer a one to a two-year warranty. In most cases, the battery

is covered as part of the warranty, but check the specific terms for your toothbrush.

Choosing an electric toothbrush comes down to one factor: likability. The best toothbrush for you is the one you're most likely to use. If you like your toothbrush, you're more likely to brush for two minutes and clean all the tooth surfaces, as dental professionals recommend. Before purchasing an electric toothbrush, factor in your oral health, lifestyle, and budget, and if you're still unsure, consult your dental professional for recommendations.

Manual Toothbrush



A manual toothbrush is a hand-held brush made of hard plastic with bristles for cleaning the gums and between teeth. A manual toothbrush has no moving parts and is not powered by anything. When purchasing a manual toothbrush, there are two factors to consider. The first is a personal preference. The best manual toothbrush is the one you will regularly use that does not harm your teeth or gums. The second factor to consider is which toothbrush removes germs and bacteria effectively. If the toothbrush is the wrong size or has damaging bristles, it will do more harm to your teeth than good. Not all manual brushes are created the same. Ensure that the brand and type you buy will help your oral health.

Some Things To Look For Are:

Cost

Manual toothbrushes are less expensive than electric ones and more portable. It is easy to bring a manual toothbrush to the office, carry one in your purse, or for traveling. The average manual toothbrush costs less than \$10 and is widely available at most pharmacies or grocery stores. A manual toothbrush should be replaced every three months, when the bristles show wear, or when you have been ill.

Size

A toothbrush with a smaller head will help clean hard-to-reach back teeth. A standard-size toothbrush with a 1/2 to a 1-inch head works best for most people, but those with a larger mouth might prefer a larger head for a better fit.

The toothbrush should have an ergonomic handle long enough to hold it comfortably in your hand. If you have dexterity issues, a thicker handle will make brushing your teeth easier.

Bristles

The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends soft-bristle toothbrushes with angled or multi-layer bristles, allowing the toothbrush to lift plaque and bacteria off the tooth without harming your teeth. Medium and hard bristles can damage your teeth and gums while brushing, and this is especially true if you brush too hard, leading to abrasion, loss of enamel, and gum irritation.

Once you figure out the type of bristles you are working with, there are a few other questions you want to answer before making a decision:

- Are you focusing on polishing and whitening the teeth?
- Do you have sensitive teeth and gums?
- Are you looking for an eco-friendly option?
- Do you wear braces or other orthodontic appliances?
- Do you need a Tongue and Cheek Cleaner on the toothbrush?
- Do you want a bristle indicator to know when the toothbrush should be replaced?

Flossing

Dental floss is a cord of thin filaments that removes food and plaque between teeth or places a toothbrush cannot reach. The American Dental Association recommends flossing daily to prevent cavities, tooth decay, and gum disease.

How often should you floss? Taking your time and flossing correctly is more important than flossing often. Dentists recommend flossing at least once a day. Flossing after every meal removes any debris stuck between your teeth and prevents plaque buildup. There is no such thing as too much flossing – unless you do it incorrectly and apply too much pressure, which can damage your gums.

There are many types of dental floss, and there is no one right floss that will suit everyone. Some people have more than one type of dental floss for different scenarios. Let's explore some common types of dental floss to enable you to choose the right kind.



Types of Dental Floss

- **Unwaxed floss** is one of the most common floss types used. It's constructed of a nylon material crafted by twisting multiple strands together. Unwaxed floss comes with no artificial flavoring, which means that this type of floss is free from chemicals. This floss is perfect for those with small gaps between their teeth, as unwaxed floss is much thinner
- **Waxed floss** is constructed similarly to unwaxed floss, with a waxed layer applied. This waxed layer strengthens the floss, so it doesn't shred or break on the user. In addition, it allows the floss to glide better between teeth than unwaxed floss. Due to the added layer of wax to this type of dental floss, it's thicker than unwaxed floss. This makes it more challenging to get into small gaps. The waxy nature of the floss also makes it harder to grip for the average user.
- **Flavored and Unflavored:** Any floss may be flavored. Flavored floss can make the process of cleaning between your teeth more enjoyable. With flavors ranging from cinnamon, mint, and peppermint to coconut and strawberry, it can make your breath smell fresher and cleaner and incentivize kids to floss their teeth. Choosing a flavored or unflavored floss is a personal preference based on an individual needs.
- **PTFE Floss (Polytetrafluorethylene Floss):** PTFE floss is made from the same material as Gore-Tech fabric. The floss is very strong, slippery, and will not shred. People with very tight spaces between their teeth prefer this floss. This floss does have Teflon in it and has caused health concerns, so dentists do not recommend extended use of this product.
- **Dental Tape:** Similar to regular dental floss but thicker. Dental tape is perfect for people with wide gaps between teeth, requiring thicker floss. This floss is not ideal for most people because it can be challenging to get between teeth.
- **Biodegradable and natural floss:** Patients can opt for locally manufactured all-natural flosses made from biodegradable silk or other raw materials. Products with threads infused in tea tree oil or other natural antimicrobial oils exist.
- **Superfloss:** The floss is used by patients with traditional braces, bonded wire retainers, and bridges. Each piece of Superfloss has three different parts—a stiff end for easy threading, a thicker spongy section, and a "regular" floss section. The threader allows the user to easily maneuver the floss under bridges and other dental fixtures to remove debris.

- **Disposable Flossers:** Floss picks hold the floss for you, so you only have to use one hand. Most also have a dental pick at the opposite end. Floss picks are convenient and comfortable but are not as effective as regular floss because they do not allow you to reach all angles and clean your teeth effectively. Disposable flossers are ideal for people with limited dexterity who have difficulty manipulating the floss around the teeth.
- **Water Flossers** – Water flossers are hand-held cleaning devices that shoot thin streams of water between your teeth or gums. The water is pressurized, making removing plaque and food buildup easy. A water flosser is easy to use and does not have any waste. It works well for individuals with dental work in the mouth and those with difficulty flossing. According to research published by Dentistry Journal, a water flosser's pulsation motion can reduce gum inflammation and bleeding while cleaning this area gently. A water flosser is challenging outside the home because it relies on electricity and water.

American Dental Association (ADA)

Whichever dental products you purchase, look for the ADA seal. The American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance, has been the leading mark of dental product safety and efficacy for 90 years. A dental product earns the ADA Seal when the manufacturer provides scientific evidence demonstrating safety and effectiveness in removing plaque and reducing gingivitis.

Ultimately, the best dental products are the ones you'll use regularly and adequately. All dental products are useless if you don't use them, so pick the ones that work best for you. Contact a professional with any questions or concerns about dental products or your dental health.



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Event Venues



Selecting an Event Venue

When planning an in-person event, one of the most important decisions you'll make is where to host it. There are many factors to consider when choosing a venue, from the size of the space and the event date to the cost.

This guide covers the essentials that should be considered when choosing the perfect venue to host your special occasion. Whether you are planning a party, prom, club or business conference, festival, or anything in between, use this helpful advice to find the perfect venue for your next event.

Location

There are a few factors to consider when narrowing down your choices, but choosing the right location is key to a successful event.

Before you start reaching out to venues, take some time to figure out what's important to you and your guests. If proximity to major transportation hubs is a priority, then you'll want to look for venues in or near city centers. If easy parking is a must-have, then suburban areas might be a better fit for you.

When deciding which type of venue will work best for your event, there are a few questions you need to ask yourself, such as:

- What is the purpose of the event?
- What type of event is it?
- What type of atmosphere am I trying to create? Can I create the theme, ambiance or mood that I want in this venue?

- How many attendees am I expecting?
- Do I need a seated or a standing venue?
- What is the layout of the venue? Will it work for your event?
- What are the technology needs for the event?

Accessibility

A great venue must be accessible to your attendees. If they're not easily able to find it and enter, you could end up with an empty room or space. First, make sure you make it clear on when and how to attend. Second, you may want to consider your transportation options if your guests are coming from far away. Good public transportation will make it easier for them to get there, which means they are more likely to attend. Next, have clear signage to and at your location. Consider if the location/setting is indoor/outdoor, formal/casual, closer or further to a specific location.

Also consider if the location is easy to find and accessible for your guests. (For example, some outdoor locations may require a short walk).

Capacity

When choosing an ideal place or spot for an event, you should consider how many attendees the venue can accommodate. There should be adequate space for open mingling. Technically, it should have enough space for attendees and all the equipment you will be using. Attendees include the guests, speakers, caterers, performers, support personnel, volunteers, and anyone who will have a part in your event.

If you have more attendees than the venue can accommodate, things could get chaotic. If the venue is too small, you will not be able to accommodate everyone who wants to participate. On the other hand, you can pay for extra space to fit more people but this will equal extra costs. The maximum occupancy is usually set based on fire and safety codes, so it is important not to exceed this amount.

A larger space is ideal, but if it is too big, it may seem impersonal. It is also more expensive. At the same time, a space that's too small can make attendees feel cramped or restricted and less comfortable or safe. An ideal venue should be large enough to accommodate everyone, but not so big that it fails to create the atmosphere you're hoping to achieve.

Also, consider any special equipment you might need in the space, such as a stage, speakers, or special lighting. The venue should accommodate anything you require to carry out your event successfully.

Be certain to make note of where guests will register or check-in and where the emergency exits are located.

Parking

Choose a venue with ample parking and make sure the attendees can access the space easily and safely. There is nothing worse than when guests arrive at a venue only to find that there is no parking or the parking is full.

The last thing you want is attendees having to look for parking elsewhere, which can take time and increase the chances of them arriving late or forgoing the event entirely. Therefore, make sure there are more parking spaces than you expect you will need, as it is better to have too many than too few.

Budget

It's no secret that planning an event can be expensive. Between catering, decorations, and renting a venue, costs can add up quickly. That's why it's important to choose a venue you can afford.

Here are some tips for finding an affordable venue for an event:

- Consider hosting your event within your organization. For example, are you part of a school district where a school would be a good option to host your event?
- Check out local community centers or church halls. Often, these facilities offer lower rental rates than a full-service venue.
- Consider sharing your venue with another group. If there are two events being held at the same time, your rental rates will go down. Plus, if you are hosting an event for a charitable cause, sharing the space with another group can help raise awareness.
- Ask about discounts. If you are renting the venue during off-hours, inquire about a possible discount.

Function Spaces and Services Offered

It is important to find out what services a venue can offer. These can include catering, live entertainment, room set-up, high-speed internet, clean-up, and more. If you need a service that the venue does not provide, it is important to find out if the venue will charge for the service if you hire it separately. Also, check to see what function spaces are available, whether it be outdoor space, indoor space, or both, and if the venue provides tables, chairs, or any other items you might need for your event.

Questions you should ask include:

- Does this venue have good acoustics and sound?
- What type of insurance is necessary and who is expected to provide it?
- Do you offer any additional services that might interest me? (such as a conference center with added technology, etc.)
- If the venue is providing food and beverages, what is the minimum number of guests for which you will be charged?
- Can you give us sample menus and a quotation?
- Can we experience a food tasting?
- Can you accommodate vegetarians or other special dietary requirements?
- Do you offer menus according to themes?
- Does the venue have a wedding or alcohol license?
- If the venue is not providing food and beverages, is there a kitchen used by you and your team?
- Does the venue have any partnerships with food vendors?
- Are the restrooms easily accessible?
- Is security offered and/or necessary?
- Will a cleaning crew make sure the venue is clean before the event and clean up afterwards?
- Does the have adequate tables, chairs, linens, silverware, etc.?
- Are there sufficient audio and video capabilities?
- Is there a stage available?
- Are there restrictions in place regarding noise or photography?
- Is there a music curfew around the venue?
- Are there any extra fees such as corkage fee, overtime fee or cancellation fee?

- If the event is planned outdoors, what is the rain plan in case of inclement weather?

Event Date and Time

Before you rush to book a venue, check availability.

You may find a perfect event space, but it may be reserved on the date you need it. It is best to check availability months before the actual date of the event, just in case the date is already booked.

Think about how flexible you could be on the dates of your event, or even time of year. You may open up some more options this way.

If you are keen about a particular place or space and it's available on the date of your event, make sure to book it as far in advance as possible. This way, you don't have to worry about the venue and you can focus your attention on other things.

Venue Experience

It's important to look at references for prospective venues before making a final decision. You can get references from past clients or even ask your friends, family, and co-workers if they have ever attended any events there.

You could also check out their website, if they have one, to see pictures or attendee reviews and ratings of any recent events that have been hosted there. This can give you a good idea of what the venue has to offer and what you can expect from it.

If the place has a restaurant, for example, you'll know if their food is well received or if they are known for being overpriced. If the venue is outside, you'll know what amenities it has and if its facilities are well maintained.

By seeing what other events have been hosted there, you can see if the venue's description matches what they actually have to offer.

Furthermore, you might want to ask if they have hosted events similar to what you are planning on hosting. Event venues often hold different types of events and you want to make sure that it has experience with hosting your type of event.

Tips for Booking an Event Venue

Are you still unsure how to choose the best venue for your event? You'll find a couple of useful tips below:

- Outdoors or indoors? If you are looking for a place that will hold at least 100 people, then it is best to stick with an indoor venue. It has better amenities and is more secure. However, outdoor venues are cheaper and offer better scenery for your photos.
- Book early. In-person events are usually planned way in advance, so be sure to book a spot at least six months ahead of your event. This will give you ample time to set up for it.
- Simply put, the earlier you book, the more you could save. The venue could provide some incentives. These could include: venue rebates; discounts on food & beverage and audio-visual; destination rebates, and additional concession packages to help your event budget's bottom line.
- Do your research on the venue's policies beforehand. While some venues are flexible with their rules, others are strict. Be sure to read over the contract and ask for a few changes if you are not comfortable accepting all their terms.
- Practice your negotiating skills. If you don't like the venue's terms, then negotiate. Add specifics to why you are not comfortable with their terms and ask them if they can change them for you. Remember that this is all about getting the best deal for yourself too.
- Book according to your needs. If you are hosting a small event of 20-30 people, then it's more efficient to book a small space than a large space. If you are hosting an event of more than 100 people, then it's best to book a large space.
- Alternative options. If you cannot find a suitable venue that agrees with your terms and conditions, then get creative. Loop in your networks to see what options you have available to you.

Event App or Website

It is also helpful if you can provide attendees with an event app or website. Today, it is more common than ever for events to have a website or an event app. These are used more frequently for large events because they enhance event experiences. Using one or both can help your attendees save time when searching for event information, such as schedules and maps.

Wrapping Up

Choosing the right venue for an event can be a lot of work, but it's well worth it to pick the right spot. Plan ahead and plan well, and do your research thoroughly. Don't hesitate to think outside the box when it comes to finding a place to hold your next event, big or small. Compare different venues to get the best possible deal, but make sure the place you choose is flexible and suitable for your event needs.

Sources: BDI Events; Whova; Event Solutions; J. Shay; Tagvenue; Sched; Superevent

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Fast Food

Fast Food



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FAST FOOD MEALS

Fast foods are quick and easy substitutes for home cooking, and a reality with the busy schedules many families maintain. However, fast foods are almost always high in calories, fat, sugar, and salt.

Fast food used to mean fried food. However, today there are many more healthy alternatives available at fast food restaurants. Some restaurants still use hydrogenated vegetable oils for frying. These oils contain trans fats, which increase your risk for heart disease. Some cities have banned or are trying to ban the use of these fats. Now, many restaurants are preparing foods using other types of fat.

Even with these changes, it is hard to eat healthy when you eat out often. Many foods are still cooked with a lot of fat, and many fast-food restaurants do not offer any lower-fat foods. Large portions also make it easy to overeat, and few restaurants offer many fresh fruits and vegetables.

Before heading out, it is important to know your personal calorie limit. Staying within yours can help you get to or maintain a healthy weight. Most adolescents need 1800 (girls) to 2200 (boys) calories; however, knowing how many calories one needs is based upon age, sex, height, weight, and activity level. When choosing what to eat and drink, it's important to get the right mix – enough nutrients, but not too many calories.

In general, eat at places that offer salads, soups, and vegetables. Select a fast-food restaurant that you know offers a variety of food selections that fit in your healthy eating plan. Along with that, the following tips can help you make healthier selections when dining at fast-food restaurants.

Check and compare nutrition information. Knowing the amount of calories, fat, and salt in fast foods can help you eat healthier. Many restaurants now offer information about their food. This information is much like the nutrition labels on the food that you buy. If it is not posted in the restaurant, ask an employee for a copy.

Have it your way. Remember you don't have to settle for what comes with your sandwich or meal – not even at fast-food restaurants. Ask for healthier options and substitutions. Adding bacon, cheese, or mayonnaise will increase the fat and calories. Ask for vegetables instead, such as lettuce or spinach, and tomatoes. With pizza, get less cheese. Also pick low-fat toppings, such as vegetables. You can also dab the pizza with a paper napkin to get rid of a lot of the fat from the cheese.

Keep portion sizes small. If the fast-food restaurant offers several sandwich sizes, pick the smallest. Bypass hamburgers with two or three beef patties, which can pack close to 800 calories and 40 grams of fat. Choose instead a regular- or children's-sized hamburger, which has about 250-300 calories. Ask for extra lettuce, tomatoes, and onions, and omit the cheese and sauce. If a smaller portion is not available, split an item to reduce calories and fat. You can always take some of your food home, and it is okay if you leave extra food on your plate.

Skip the large serving of french fries or onion rings and ask for a small serving instead. This switch alone saves 200 to 300 calories. Or, ask if you can substitute a salad or fruit for the fries.

Strive to make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Take advantage of the healthy side dishes offered at many fast-food restaurants. For example, instead of french fries choose a side salad with low-fat dressing or a baked potato, or add a fruit bowl or a fruit and yogurt option to your meal. Other healthy choices include apple or orange slices, corn on the cob, steamed rice, or baked potato chips.

When choosing an entrée salad, go with grilled chicken, shrimp, or vegetables with fat-free or low-fat dressing on the side, rather than regular salad dressing, which can have 100 to 200 calories per packet. Vinegar or lemon juice are also healthier substitutes for salad dressing. Watch out for high-calorie salads, such as those with deep fried shells or those topped with breaded chicken or other fried toppings. Also skip extras, such as cheese, bacon bits and croutons, which

quickly increase your calorie count. If you forgo the dressing, you can find salads for around 300 calories at most fast food chains.

Opt for grilled items. Fried and breaded foods, such as crispy chicken sandwiches and breaded fish fillets, are high in fat and calories. Select grilled or roasted lean meats – such as turkey or chicken meat, lean ham, or lean roast beef. Look for meat, chicken, and fish that are roasted, grilled, baked, or broiled. Avoid meats that are breaded or fried. If the dish you order comes with a heavy sauce, ask for it on the side and use just a small amount.

Go for whole grains. Select whole-grain breads or bagels. Croissants and biscuits have a lot of fat. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.

Slow down on sodium. Americans have a taste for salt, but salt plays a role in high blood pressure. Everyone, including kids, should reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day (about 1 tsp of salt). Adults age 51 and older, African Americans of any age, and individuals with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should further reduce their sodium intake to 1,500 mg a day.

When eating at a fast food restaurant, pay attention to condiments. Foods like soy sauce, ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressings, and seasoning packets are high in sodium. Choose low-sodium soy sauce and ketchup. Have a carrot or celery stick instead of olives or pickles. Use only a sprinkling of flavoring packets instead of the entire packet.

Watch what you drink. What you drink is as important as what you eat. Teenagers often drink more carbonated and caffeinated beverages and eat more fast foods. This, along with peer pressure related to eating and exercise, make teenagers particularly vulnerable to becoming sedentary, overweight, and obese. An obese teenager has a greater than 70% risk of becoming an obese adult.

Many beverages are high in calories, contain added sugars and offer little or no nutrients, while others may provide nutrients but too much fat and too many calories. For example, a large regular soda (32 ounces) has about 300 calories. Instead, order diet soda, water, unsweetened iced tea, sparkling water or mineral water. Also, skip the shakes and other ice cream drinks. Large shakes can contain more than 800 calories and all of your saturated fat allotment for the day.

Drink water. This is a better choice over sugary drinks. Regular soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sweet drinks usually contain a lot of added sugar, which provides more calories than needed. Water is usually easy on the wallet. You can save money by drinking water from the tap when eating out. When water just won't do, enjoy the beverage of your choice, but just cut back, avoiding the supersized option.

Don't forget dairy. Many fast food restaurants offer milk as an option for kids' meals, but you can request it! Dairy products provide calcium, vitamin D, potassium, protein, and other nutrients needed for good health throughout life. When you choose milk or milk alternatives, select low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soymilk. Each type of milk offers the same key nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, and potassium, but the number of calories are very different. Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups of milk per day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2 ½ cups, and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.

The American Heart Association recommends some examples of healthier alternatives to common fast food picks.

Instead of...	Try...
Danish	Small bagel
Jumbo cheeseburger	Grilled chicken, sliced meats or even a regular 2 oz. hamburger on a bun with lettuce, tomato and onion
Fried chicken or tacos	Grilled chicken or salad bar (but watch out for the high-calorie dressing and ingredients)
French fries	Baked potato with vegetables or low-fat or fat-free sour cream topping

Potato chips	Pretzels, baked potato chips
Milkshake	Juice or low-fat or fat-free milk or a diet soft drink (Limit beverages that are high in calories but low in nutrients, such as soft drinks.)

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- Enjoy Your Food, But Eat Less

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Fast Food Mobile Apps

Cost is a consideration when buying fast food and many these restaurants frequently offer specials, combos, or reduced price menus. Many fast food restaurants have mobile apps and offer deals exclusively through these apps. By consumers simply downloading an app to their devices, they can easily save money at their favorite restaurants. Consumers should be alert though of tactics that create target coupons for their favorite menu items to entice them to order more often and that apps collect user data. Be aware of the privacy policies of each app. Increasingly, loyalty programs and reward points are being used by more fast food mobile apps. These programs often offer exclusive discounts or even free menu items. These fast food deals may last for a limited time, so make sure you check the app's current promotions before you order. Here are some examples of offers that may be available to consumers through apps:

Restaurant	Sample Offer
Burger King	\$2 Whopper Wednesdays
Chick-fil-A	Chick-fil-A One members earn points for purchases.
Domino's Pizza	Any large specialty pizza for \$12.99
McDonald's	Free breakfast biscuit with minimum purchase of \$1
Popeye's	Free regular side, small drink or apple pie with email sign-up
Sonic	Half-off drinks and Slushies for app orders
Wendy's	\$2 off any Premium Combo

These apps often allow consumers to place orders ahead of time and can reduce the amount of time that people have to wait on their food. Consumers must be aware of additional fees that can be added to their meal cost by opting for delivery verses in-person pick-up. Fast food apps can offer their own delivery service in select markets, and many restaurants work with third-party food delivery apps like Postmates, UberEats, DoorDash, and Grubhub. When ordering fast food for delivery through third-party apps, consumers must also be aware of delays that may occur during delivery that could have impacts on the taste and quality of their meals as well as food safety if the food is not transported in a method that keeps it at the ideal temperature.

Invitations



Invitations

FCS Consumer Decision Making Judging Team Study Guide

A History of Invitations

Traditionally, written invitations are used for larger scale “life events” such as weddings, anniversaries, graduations, birthdays or baby showers. Invitations, however, are not a modern concept. Here is a brief overview of the history of invitations:

The first, written invitations to formal events dates back to the middle ages. They were considered a luxury item. At that time, only the wealthiest of families could afford this type of service. They would employ monks, who were skilled in the art of calligraphy, to handwrite each invitation.

Later, in the middle of the 1600's, most invitations were created by engraving. The engraving process involved hand engraving the text -- in reverse -- on a metal plate. The invitations would then be printed from the metal plate. However, the ink used in the engraving process would easily smudge. So, to protect the ink from doing this, it became a necessary custom to place a piece of tissue-like paper on the top of the invitation. This tradition carries on today whereby a small piece of tissue paper and/or vellum are placed on top of the invitation before placing it in the envelope.

Of course, in the 1600 and 1700's, the postal system was new and all deliveries were made by horse. To protect the invitation throughout its travels, an outer envelope was used to ensure that the invitation and envelope were safe from outside elements. This is where the double envelope tradition began that is still used today for formal invitations.

By the middle of the 20th century, thermography was used to print invitations. Thermography is a special type of printing process that produces raised letters without etching or engraving. This process made invitations affordable to the masses.

Today, formal, printed invitations are still used. However, it is also very popular to select and/or create and buy invitations from an online vendor.

Ordering Invitations from an Online Source

While online invitations can result in a much quicker turn-around time and in many instances allow you the freedom to create your own design work, there are many things to consider when selecting and ordering invitations from an online source. Consider the following:

Ordering Invitations from an Online Source continued

Printing Processes

- Type of printing process(es) used include:
 - **Digital Printing (also known as Flat Printing)** -- the most common and cost effective printing method available. Much like our home inkjet or laser printers except that the large, professional printers result in high quality prints.
 - **Foil Stamped Wedding Invitations** -- Foil invitation add elements of sparkle and shine to part of an invitation by pressing shiny metallic paper (comes in a variety of colors besides gold) into the invitation to create a deep impression. Most often used to create high-end wedding invitations.
 - **Digital Foil Printing (Scodix Printing)** -- Digital foil is a new digital printing method that uses heat to adhere foil to paper. For small print jobs, it is less expensive to use than traditional stamped foil. However, it costs much more for a larger quantity. Unlike stamped foil, digital foil has an embossed (raised) effect.
 - **Screen Printing** -- Like digital printing, screen printing is also an affordable print technique. It is also a budget-friendly print alternative to gold foil. Screen printing comes in both flat and raised options.
 - **Embossing** -- This is a good method for creating a monogram or large-scale text. Blind embossing is an ink-free method that uses metal plates to stamp letters into the paper and create a raised-relief surface. This method is not typically used for printing invitations, but rather is used for a reply card or thank-you note.

Ordering Invitations from an Online Source continued

Printing Processes *continued*

- **Laser-cut Printing** -- Used to create fine art paper artwork such as intricate floral designs, mesh pattern or any other art cut into the paper. The end result is a delicate look. Cost depends on how long each piece takes to cut -- the more intricate the design, the more it will cost.
- **Letterpress Printing** -- Even though this is a old printing technique, the most luxurious invitations printed today are created using letterpress printing. This type of printing creates exquisite textures on thick, soft, cotton paper.

Services Provided

- Photo retouching options
- Conversion of photos to black and white, grayscale or sepia
- Eco-friendly options -- such as recycled paper, soy inks
- Rush order availability
- Invitation addressing service -- available to address all types of cards such as save the dates, invitations and thank you cards. Your guest names and addresses will be printed in ink on the front of the envelopes, using fonts that match your chosen design.
- Invitation assembly services -- puts the invitation, RSVP cards, etc... in envelopes and will add postage and mail them on your behalf for a fee.

Company Reputation:

- How long has the company been in business
- Number and type of reviews
- Contact information

Product Options:

- Options for: color, paper type (including artisan and handmade options), font, ink
- Character limits -- a limit to the number of words or letters that can be used

Ordering Invitations from an Online Source continued

Product Options *continued*

- Options for budgets and styles
- Use of images including formats
- Availability of new trends in colors and styles
- Invitation sizes (Are non-standard sizes available?)
- Availability of envelopes and inserts
- Lettering styles available for addressing
- Flat or foiled options

Printing, Shipping Options and Delivery Time

- Printing time
- Delivery time
- Shipping methods
- If the invitation involves multiple pieces and invitation assembly is used, how will the invitation assembly time affect the delivery date?
- Will the lettering push back my delivery date?
- Payment type and due date
- Proofing -- An opportunity to review and make changes before it goes to print. If changes are required, how does this affect delivery time? Is there an extra fee for making changes?
- If my printed invitations do not match my approved proof, will my invitations be reprinted with corrections at no additional cost? How does this affect the delivery time? If a rush order results, will you pay for the expedited shipping costs?
- How much additional time will it take to redo my order if there is a problem?

Costs

- Do you have a refund policy if for some reason I need to cancel my order?
- Is there a minimum required?
- Is there a price break -- less cost for certain amounts
- Any additional extra fees -- for extras? reprinting? foiling? lettering? assembly? expedited shipping?
- Preferred payment type? Is a deposit required?

Useful Tips:

- **Proofs:** Insist on getting a proof. Have at least two other people review all your proofs before you sign off on them to ensure that you catch all errors.
- **Color Resolution:** If ordering online, remember that color resolution can vary drastically between screens. To guarantee the exact color you want, ask that a sample be snail-mailed to you.
- **Contracts:** If you order your invitations from an online company, make sure your contract states that they will correct mistakes they make for free.
- **Extras:** Order 20–30 extra save-the-dates and/or invitations with envelopes in case you have to add to the guest list or you make a mistake when assembling or addressing the envelopes. Don't forget, you will want a keepsake for yourself!
- **Consolidate for Consistency:** Consider working with one stationer or graphic designer for all of your printed materials to ensure that all of the components convey a consistent design concept.
- **Evites:** Evites create an electronic invitation that are great to use for more casual events. They are also ideal for supporting events -- like a bachelorette party for a wedding. They especially work great if you are not going to have time to order and mail traditional invitations. One of the best features of evites is that they allow for guests to automatically RSVP. No wait time is needed for snail-mail.

Invitation Etiquette

Graduation:

- Send announcements a month before the ceremony if you want them to attend or a month after if you want them to be aware.
- Include the name of the graduate, the date and year of the event, and the name of the college or high school from which the student is graduating.
- Use black or blue ink if you're sending handwritten announcements.
- Address the envelopes using the formal Miss, Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., etc... before the surname.

Invitation Etiquette continued

Birthday parties:

- Generally 4-6 weeks is fine for birthday parties. For a milestone birthday event (think sweet 16, 21st, 39 and holding, 40 and over the hill, etc...) and you want to make sure certain people can be there, you may want to clear the date with them ahead of time, or at least give them a longer lead time with your invitations.
- For a child's birthday party, be sure to include the following information:
 - Child's name and age
 - Identify if the party is a drop-off event or whether parents and siblings can attend
- All birthday party invitations should include the following:
 - Party theme (if applicable)
 - Preferences regarding gifts if you have them -- such as no gifts, bring a canned food donation for charity instead of gift, educational gifts only, etc.)
 - Party duration -- provide both a start time and an end time
 - Dress code, if applicable. For instance, if it is a swim party, invitees will need to be reminded to bring such things as a swimsuit, towel, flip flops, sunscreen, etc...
 - Directions and instructions regarding where to/how to park, if applicable

Weddings:

- Send Save the Date cards 8 to 12 months prior to the wedding (or send them earlier for a destination or holiday weekend).
- For a local wedding, it is appropriate to send invitations out two (2) months in advance. For destination weddings, your guests will need more time to book accommodations, so sending out invites three (3) to four (4) months in advance is more appropriate.

Formal Parties:

- Parties like formal dinners, debutante, or charity balls require a little more time because guests typically bring a guest and need to plan special attire! Four (4) to six (6) weeks prior to the event is the appropriate time to send invitations.

Invitation Etiquette continued

Holiday Parties:

- Holidays are always busy, so invitations for Christmas or New Years Eve parties should be mailed at least a month before to be safe.
- If your holiday party is more informal, it is appropriate to mail your invitations three (3) weeks or less.

Others:

- Other parties such as teas, going-away, retirements, anniversaries, cocktails and/or housewarmings can follow the three (3) weeks or less rule as these events are typically more informal.

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Skincare: Sunscreen

Skincare: Sunscreen



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SUNSCREEN OVERVIEW

Sunscreen is one of the most important tools we have to protect our skin from the sun, yet nearly one third of Americans never use it. Too much sun exposure can cause sunburn, premature aging, wrinkles, and in many cases, skin cancer.

When used as directed, sunscreen can:

- Decrease your risk of skin cancers and skin precancers. Studies show that regular daily use of SPF 30 sunscreen, when used as directed, can reduce your risk of developing squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) by about 40 percent, and lower your melanoma risk by 50 percent.
- Help prevent premature skin aging caused by the sun, including wrinkles, sagging and age spots.

Unfortunately, many people think that a tan is a healthy look. But what these people do not know is that a tan is actually like a giant scab that your skin creates to try to protect itself from more sun damage.

It is impossible to completely avoid the sun, of course, but you can take precautions to ensure that you are protecting yourself from its harmful rays.

Know the 6 W's of Sunscreen:

WHO: Everyone under the sun except babies under six months old

WHICH: Broad spectrum SPF 15 or higher; Dermatologists recommend SPF 30

WHEN: Every day, 30 minutes prior to going outdoors. Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours, and more often if you're sweating or swimming.

WHERE: All exposed skin

WHAT: Apply one ounce (about two tablespoons) to your entire body for each application

WHY: Reduces your risk of skin damage and skin cancer

SUNSCREEN OVERVIEW (CONT.)

In addition, consumers should engage in sun protective behaviors, such as wearing protective clothing; wearing sunglasses and a hat that provides adequate shade; avoiding the sun during the hours of 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM and finding shade whenever possible during these periods of peak sunlight.

Consumers should also use adequate protection and appropriate precautions with sunlamps and tanning beds/booths. Both are sources of UV radiation that have been linked to skin cancer, skin burns, premature skin aging, and both short-term and long-term eye damage.

Sunscreen should not be used on babies under six months of age. Staying out of the sun, using shaded structures and sun-protective clothing are the best ways to safeguard infants.

Parents of infants and toddlers 6 months and older may apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all skin not covered by clothing, according to the instructions on the product label. When outdoors, sunscreen should be reapplied approximately every two hours, or as often as the label says. Sunscreens that use the ingredients zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, or special sunscreens made for infants or toddlers, may cause less irritation to their sensitive skin.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN: WHAT MAKES THE SUN HARMFUL?

The sun itself is not what harms our skin. It is the ultraviolet (UV) radiation that the sun gives off that actually causes the damage. There are three types of UV rays. They are UVA, UVB, and UVC.

- **UVA** rays penetrate deepest into your skin, reaching the new skin that lies far beneath the surface and are linked to long-term skin damage such as wrinkles. UVA damages your skin, resulting in a tan. It is the primary radiation used in tanning beds. It causes almost all forms of skin aging, including wrinkles. UVA damages the collagen and elastin in the skin and generates free radicals.
- **UVB** rays are responsible for most of the damage that your skin incurs from the sun, causing sunburn and most skin cancers. UVB damages the DNA in skin cells and causes DNA mutations that can eventually lead to melanoma and other types of skin cancer. UVB radiation from the sun can also cause cataracts. Cataracts happen when proteins in your eye lens get damaged. The proteins start to collect pigments that cloud your vision.
- **UVC** rays do not reach the earth's surface because they are blocked by the ozone layer; humans are only exposed to UVC radiation from artificial sources such as a lamp or lasers.



HOW SUNSCREEN WORKS

Sunscreen includes active ingredients that help prevent the sun's UV radiation from reaching your skin. Here's how the two types of sunscreen work for you:

- 1) Physical (mineral) sunscreen ingredients (including the minerals titanium dioxide and zinc oxide) reflect and scatter the rays (like a shield) before they penetrate your skin.
- 2) Chemical sunscreen ingredients (like avobenzone and octisalate) absorb UV rays (like a sponge) before they can damage your skin.



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved 20 human-made chemicals or natural sun blocking agents for use in sunscreens. The most common chemicals that protect you from UVB rays include: cinnamates, patamates, or benzophenones like oxybenzone and Dioxybenzone. The chemicals that protect you from UVA rays are titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. A good sunscreen will contain agents that block both types of radiation.

SUN PROTECTION FACTOR (SPF)

The sun protection factor (SPF) value indicates the level of sunburn protection provided by the sunscreen product. All sunscreens must be tested to measure the amount of UV radiation exposure it takes to cause sunburn when using the sunscreen compared to how much UV exposure it takes to cause a sunburn when not using the sunscreen. The product is then labeled with the appropriate SPF value.

Sunscreens are made in a wide range of SPFs. Higher SPF values (up to 50) provide greater sunburn protection. Because SPF values are determined from a test that measures protection against sunburn, SPF values primarily indicate a sunscreen's UVB protection. According to the FDA and the EPA, to get the most protection out of sunscreen you should choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15.

Some people incorrectly believe that SPF relates to the time of solar exposure. For example, some people believe that, if they normally get sunburned in one hour, then an SPF 15 sunscreen allows them to stay in the sun for 15 hours (e.g., 15 times longer) without getting sunburned. This is not true because SPF is not directly related to the time of solar exposure but to amount of solar exposure. The amount of solar exposure we experience depends on many factors.

For example, the sun is stronger in the middle of the day compared to early morning and early evening hours. That means your risk of sunburn is higher at midday. Solar intensity is also impacted by your geographic location, with greater solar intensity occurring at lower latitudes. Because of this, someone who is closer to the equator may experience greater solar exposure than someone who is farther from the equator but spends the same amount of time in the sun.

SUN PROTECTION FACTOR (SPF) (CONT.)

It is also important to remember that high-number SPFs last the same amount of time as low-number SPFs. A high-number SPF does not allow you to spend additional time outdoors without reapplication. As many individuals only apply about 20–50% of the amount of sunscreen needed to achieve the amount of SPF on the label, application of high-SPF sunscreens helps to compensate for this under-application. Sunscreen should be reapplied approximately every two hours when outdoors, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.

BROAD SPECTRUM

Broad spectrum sunscreens help protect against both forms of UV radiation - UVA and UVB. However, not all sunscreens are broad spectrum, so it is important to look for this description on the label. A sunscreen product's SPF value is primarily an indicator of the level of protection that product provides against UVB radiation, but broad-spectrum sunscreens also protect against UVA radiation. Broad spectrum Sunscreen provides protection against both by providing a chemical barrier that absorbs or reflects UV radiation before it can damage the skin.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the FDA recommend at least an SPF of 15. Dermatologists recommend an SPF of 30.

Sunscreens that are not broad spectrum or that lack an SPF of at least 15 must carry the following warning on their Drug Facts label:

Skin Cancer/Skin Aging Alert: Spending time in the sun increases your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging. This product has been shown only to help prevent sunburn, not skin cancer or early skin aging.

STORING YOUR SUNSCREEN

To keep your sunscreen in good condition and maintain its effectiveness, the FDA recommends you not expose sunscreen containers to direct sun. Protect the sunscreen by wrapping the containers in towels or keeping them in the shade while outside in the heat for long periods of time.

This is why sunscreen labels must say: "Protect the product in this container from excessive heat and direct sun."

Keep unused sunscreen in a safe place that is away from sun and heat.

CHECK EXPIRATION DATES

FDA regulations require all nonprescription drugs to have an expiration date unless the manufacturer's stability testing has shown that the product will remain stable for at least three years. That means a sunscreen product that doesn't have an expiration date should be considered expired three years after purchase.

To make sure that your sunscreen is providing the sun protection promised in its labeling, the FDA recommends that you:

- 1) Do not use sunscreen products that have passed their expiration date (if there is one listed).
- 2) Do not use sunscreen products that have no expiration date and were not purchased within the last three years.
- 3) Discard expired sunscreens because they may not be safe and effective anymore. If you do not know how old your sunscreen is, discard it.

WHAT TYPE SHOULD YOU USE?

The best type of sunscreen is the one you will use again and again. Just make sure it offers broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection, has an SPF of 30 or higher, and is water resistant.

The kind of sunscreen you use is a matter of personal choice and may vary depending on the area of the body to be protected. Available sunscreen options include lotions, creams, gels, oils, butters, pastes / ointments, wax sticks, and sprays.

Creams are best for dry skin and applying on the face.

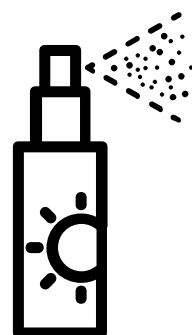
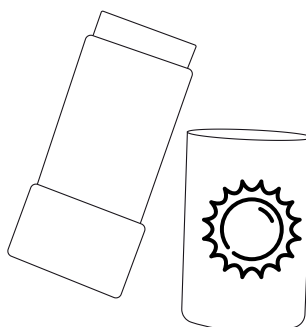
Gels are good for oily complexions and hairy areas.

Sticks are good to use around the eyes.

Sprays are sometimes preferred by parents since they are easy to apply to a child's skin. However, the challenge in using sprays is that it is difficult to know if you have used enough sunscreen to protect all sun-exposed areas of the body.

To evenly cover the skin and use spray sunscreen safely, follow these tips:

- 1) Spray until your (or your child's) skin glistens, then rub the sunscreen into the skin to get even coverage.
- 2) Do not apply spray sunscreen near heat or close to an open flame.
- 3) Avoid inhaling spray sunscreen by never spraying it around or near the face or mouth and not spraying it into the wind.



WHAT TYPE SHOULD YOU USE?

Tinted sunscreens add protection against visible light, in addition to the sun's UVA and UVB rays. Research has shown visible light can worsen dark spots caused by the sun. Tinted sunscreen that matches with your skin tone can also help you avoid the white residue or "cast" that some sunscreens leave on your skin.

Dermatologists don't recommend sunscreen with insect repellent. Purchase and apply each product separately, as sunscreens need to be applied generously and often; however, insect repellent should be used sparingly and much less frequently. Some moisturizers and cosmetics have SPF. While these products are convenient, remember that sunscreen needs to be reapplied approximately every two hours when you're outdoors.

In addition, keep in mind that while some sunscreens are water resistant, no sunscreen is "waterproof" or "sweatproof." Sunscreen manufacturers are not allowed to use these terms, as they would be misleading. When using a water-resistant sunscreen, you should reapply it after swimming or sweating.

The directions for using sunscreen products can vary according to their forms. Always read the label before using a sunscreen product.

Other factors to consider:

- Your skin cancer risk factors: Your skin type and family history will determine the level of protection needed for you.
- Photosensitivity: No matter your skin type, certain medications and disorders make your skin highly sensitive to the sun, raising your protection requirements.
- Skin conditions: You can choose from sunscreens for dry skin, oily skin, acne-prone skin and sensitive skin.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN--COST

Sunscreens can vary in price from a few cents per ounce for generic brands to a few dollars per ounce for designer brands. Studies show that the price of sunscreen is not related to its effectiveness. However, for some high-risk individuals who are especially sensitive to the sun's rays, cost may make a difference.

Often, the sunscreen's cost suggests a special way that the product was made. For example, a sunscreen made especially for young children may cost more than regular sunscreen, but the difference in price is worth it when you figure that the baby's sunscreen was created with a special formula that won't burn if it gets in the baby's eyes.

For most people though, any sunscreen that contains an FDA-approved sun blocking agent will provide adequate protection. Your best bet is to try out several different products and find the one that works best for you.

CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN

Putting it on- Sunscreen works best when it is applied about 30 minutes before you head out into the sun. The best way to apply sunscreen is to smooth it in lightly with your fingertips and then allow it to dry before you put on clothes so that it does not have a chance to rub off. Many sunscreens will stain clothing, so it is a good idea to let the sunscreen dry completely before dressing.

Water resistance- There are two water-resistance categories for sunscreen: "water-resistant" and "very water-resistant." Water-resistant sunscreens are those that retain their labeled SPF after being worn in the water for 40 minutes. Very water-resistant sunscreens retain their labeled SPF after 80 minutes in the water. It is important to note that no sunscreen is truly "waterproof," and claims to that effect are false.

CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN (CONT.)

Keeping it on- For the best protection, you should reapply sunscreen whenever you come out of the water or every 30 minutes if you are sweating heavily. If you are involved in normal activities, reapplying sunscreen every one to two hours should be sufficient.

Cover all areas- When you are applying sunscreen, it is important to cover those hard-to-reach areas. Be sure to apply sunscreen to your eyelids, lips, ears, neck, feet, and hands. However, you should be careful when you are applying sunscreen around your eyes to make sure that you don't get any in your eyes.

Choosing a sunscreen that is thicker (like a cream) is a better bet on your face because it is easier to control. It should take about 1-ounce of sunscreen to cover your entire body. This means that a 6-ounce bottle of sunscreen should last for only six applications. Because it can be hard to remember where you have already applied sunscreen, the sunscreens that have added color but dry clear are helpful, especially with children. Sunscreens with added color can also be more fun for kids to wear, so they might not mind getting slathered in it as much. However, before you purchase a sunscreen with added color, make sure it has all of the other requirements of a good sunscreen.

Skin reactions- The first sunscreens relied on a chemical called para-aminobenzoic acid or PABA. This product caused skin irritation for many people, so sunscreens have changed to milder chemicals. A PABA-free sunscreen is an especially good choice for those with sensitive skin. Additionally, fragrances added to sunscreens can cause allergic reactions in some people who use them. There are fragrance-free alternatives that protect just as well.

CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN (CONT.)

Safety concerns- There have been past incidents in which people applying and wearing sunscreen spray near open flames caught fire and, as a result, suffered significant burns that required medical treatment. Although the specific products reported to have been used in these incidents were voluntarily recalled from the market and are no longer on store shelves, there are many other sunscreen spray products which still do contain flammable ingredients, like alcohol.

Flammable products are required to have a label warning indicating that they are flammable and should not be used near an open flame.

To stay safe while using sunscreen sprays, do the following:

- When you choose a sunscreen, think about where you'll be using it. If you'll be anywhere near a flame source, avoid any product with a flammability warning, and choose another non-flammable sunscreen product instead. This recommendation is particularly important when it comes to choosing a product for children, since they are frequently active and may be near flame sources.
- While applying and wearing sunscreen products labeled as flammable, avoid open flames.

Using these sunscreen tips, along with other protective measures, makes a difference in how well you can protect yourself and your family from sunburn, skin cancer, early skin aging and other risks of overexposure to the sun.

Sources: EPA, FDA, American Academy of Dermatology Association, Kenvue

Water Bottles

2024 Consumer Decision Making Study Guide

Junior and Senior

Water Bottles

Water bottles are made from a variety of materials and can vary greatly in shape and size. There is sure to be a water bottle to fit the needs of every consumer.

Materials

Plastic

- **Versatility:** Plastic water bottles come in limitless shapes, colors, and textures.
- **Weight:** Plastic is a lightweight material compared to other options.
- **Affordable:** Plastic water bottles are generally inexpensive.
- **Health and Safety Concerns:** Plastic water bottles that are a hard plastic labeled with the number 7 have BPA (Bisphenol A). BPA is a widely used chemical that is found in polycarbonate plastics, epoxy resin, food storage containers, and eye wear. It has been linked to all kinds of health issues like obesity and infertility. This is worsened when the bottle with BPA sits in the sun or has a hot beverage inside.
- **Bad for the Environment:** While plastic water bottles are designed for more than single-use plastic bottles, they tend to wear out quickly compared to other materials. They will then go into the landfills.
- **Durability:** Plastic water bottles make denting and breaking nearly impossible.
- **Taste:** With time, plastic water bottles will take on the taste of liquids stored in the bottle.
- **Smell:** Plastic bottles often have scents that attach to their chemical bonds, causing the bottle to smell over time.
- **Insulation:** Plastic bottles do not hold cold very well and will lose their temperature quickly.
- **Washing:** Generally, hard plastic water bottles are dishwasher safe.



Recycled Plastic

- Potentially have more health dangers than regular plastic water bottles, due to PET plastic (Polyethylene Terephthalate).
- Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) is a strong synthetic fiber made from ethylene glycol and terephthalic acid. It is commonly used in carbonated drink beverage bottles. It is the most common type of plastic that is recycled.

- Eco-Friendly: The ability to melt the plastic back to original form and reuse allows plastic to stay out of landfills.
- Recycled plastic material has the same characteristics as regular plastic water bottles.

Glass

- Washing: Glass bottles are generally safe to put in the dishwasher.
- Color: Glass can come in clear and a variety of colors to be able to track the amount of water you take in.
- Taste: Glass water bottles have no impact on the taste of water or drink.
- Smell: Glass water bottles have no smell associated with them.
- Insulation: They do not provide any insulation, so your beverage will not remain cold or hot.
- Durability: Glass can shatter easily when you drop it.
- Weight: Glass water bottles are among the heaviest. They are great for those who do not travel with their bottle during the day.



Single-Walled Stainless Steel

- Weight: Second to plastic, this is the lightest bottle option. Great for backpacking.
- Durability: Will not break when you drop them. Often will dent upon dropping, but will still hold liquids.
- Health risks: No known health risks.
- Affordable: Considering their lifespan, stainless steel is a great option.
- Taste: Single-walled stainless steel water bottles have no impact on the taste of water or drink.
- Smell: There is no smell associated with single-walled stainless steel.
- Transfers Heat: Because it is single-walled, hot beverages will be conducted easily and may injure your hand.
- Insulation: Cold drinks will lose their temperature quickly because they are single-walled and will take on the outside temperature.
- Washing: Single-walled stainless steel is dishwasher safe.



Insulated Stainless Steel

- **Insulation:** Because of the insulation, typically a double-wall, they maintain the temperature of the contents, both hot and cold.
- **Durability:** The double-wall gives an added layer of protection against dents, and the risk of breaking is virtually non-existent.
- **Portable:** Because the insulation prevents heat transfer, condensation will not form on the bottle. This ensures your hands will not get burned or chilled when you hold your bottle. They are not as heavy, so they can be carried easily.
- **Taste:** Insulated stainless steel water bottles have no impact on the taste of water or drink.
- **Smell:** There is no smell associated with insulated stainless steel.
- **Health Risks:** Because it is stainless steel, they pose no known health risks.
- **Color:** They come in a variety of colors and finishes (matte, opaque, or shiny).
- **Affordability:** Can be affordable, especially considering their lifespan and durability.
- **Weight:** They are heavier than plastic, but lighter than glass.
- **Washing:** If they are vacuum insulated, you can only hand wash them.



Aluminum

- **Weight:** Aluminum is very light weight, so it is a great alternative to plastic.
- **Affordable:** Aluminum is a cheap material to produce.
- **Health Risks:** Aluminum bottles require a lining because the aluminum can emit toxic chemicals. The linings are often made of plastics or resins, which can contain BPA.
- **Taste:** Traces of the flavors of your drinks can cling to the lining of the bottle affecting the taste.
- **Smell:** The water bottles may take on the smell of liquids over time.
- **Insulation:** Not well insulated. Cold water will lose temperature quickly.
- **Durability:** Aluminum dents easier than stainless steel. However, it will not break if you drop it.
- **Washing:** Not dishwasher safe and will need to be hand washed.



Silicone

- **Weight:** Silicone is a light material, so it is easy to carry around.
- **Durability:** Silicone is a resistant material. It won't break upon dropping. It can be punctured with sharp materials.
- **Washing:** They are dishwasher safe and can withstand high temperatures. This makes them easy to clean.

- **Health Risks:** Silicone water bottles are made without harmful chemicals that are used in plastic water bottles. It is a non-porous material that prevents bacteria and mold growth.
- **Environmentally Friendly:** They are reusable and long-lasting.
- **Insulation:** Does not keep cold well. Silicone keeps heat longer.
- **Taste:** Silicone can have a slight plastic taste when first purchased, but a proper wash before using can eliminate it. Flavored drinks may also cling to the material and affect taste if not washed properly.
- **Smell:** Silicone can have a slight plastic smell when first purchased. A proper wash before use can eliminate it.
- **Discoloration:** They may show discoloration or staining over time.
- **Collapsible and easy to store.**



Sizes

Small

- **Size Range: 5-16 ounces**
- 6-8 ounces: Best for long-distance runners so they can easily lift a water bottle from their waist and take a drink.
- 16 ounces: Great for home, travel, work, and short hikes. Can easily clip onto a backpack or slide into a cup holder without adding much weight.

Medium

- **Size Range: 17-24 ounces**
- 20 ounces: Easy to clean and light weight. Commonly used for home, travel, work, picnics, and average length hikes.

Large

- **Size Range: 25+ ounces**
- 32 ounces: Meets half daily water consumption needs. Common for fitness and athletic training, day trips, and longer hikes.
- 40 ounces: Commonly used for fitness and athletic training, day trips, longer hikes, family activities, and camping.

Shape

Width: Aside from the volume the bottle can hold (refer to size section), the exterior width of the bottle is important. Ensure it fits your space, your hand, backpack sleeve, waistband loop, or cup holder.

Height: Some bottles may be too tall to fit in coffee machines or water dispensers, so you will need to consider the uses before choosing a bottle.

Interior Angles: The shape of the bottle relates to the ease of cleaning. If a bottle has sharp corners, it can be more difficult to clean.

Mouth

Mouth refers to the opening at the top of the bottle.

Wide-Mouth

- Wide enough to fit ice cubes.
- Easy to clean.

Narrow-Mouth

- Difficult to reach inside to clean.
- Reduced likelihood of water splashing.

Handle Types

No Handle: No handle attached to the water bottle at all.

Bottle Handle: Handles are built into the water bottle and are rigid and cannot change.

Cap Handle: This handle is attached/built into the cap of the water bottle. These can be rigid or soft. You can switch out caps for another one with a different handle.

Cap Types

There are a variety of types of caps available for water bottles. Each type has its own advantages and disadvantages, and you need to choose the one that best fits your needs and preferences.

Screw-On Cap

- Cap screws on firmly in place, minimizing the amount of possible leakage.
- Must open the cap each time to take a drink.
- Water can easily spill or splash out if you are moving while opening the cap.

Push-Pull Cap

- Push to close and pull to open the cap of the bottle.
- Opens to a spout within the bottle.
- Common in sports bottles.



Flip-Top Cap

- Hinged lid that flips open with a push button or by pulling it up.
- Opens to reveal straw or spout.

Straw Cap

- Cap has a straw built in that extends into the water bottle.
- Straw can flip up or can be permanently up.

Cleaning

Water bottles should be washed daily and deep cleaned once a week. Water bottles should be cleaned regularly if you are sick, if the water bottle was left outside, or on the ground at the gym.



Daily Cleaning Method

Materials Needed: warm water, dish soap, bottle brush

- Step 1: remove the water bottle cap
- Step 2: add a squirt of dish soap into the water bottle
- Step 3: fill the water bottle with warm water
- Step 4: add the cap back on and shake the water bottle
- Step 5: remove the cap again and scrub the bottle with the brush
- Step 6: scrub the cap with warm water and dish soap using the brush
- Step 7: rinse the cap and water bottle with warm water and set out to dry

Deep Cleaning Method

Materials Needed: vinegar, cool water, paper towel/dishcloth

- Step 1: remove the water bottle cap
- Step 2: fill the bottle halfway with vinegar
- Step 3: fill the rest of the bottle with cool water and allow it to sit overnight
- Step 4: empty and rinse the bottle with warm water
- Step 5: dry the bottle with a paper towel or dishcloth

For an extra clean, if the water bottle is dishwasher safe, place the water bottle in the dishwasher for a cleaning cycle

Storage

Storing water bottles of many different sizes can be tricky. There are many options depending on your needs. Listed below are a few different options.

Adjustable Cabinet Organizer

- Great for all size water bottles.
- Available in multiple shelf options to fit your needs.

Over-the-Door Hanging Organizer

- Great when shelf space is unavailable.
- Best for small and medium size water bottles.
- Can be stored on any door.

Slim Storage Cart

- Best for small and medium size water bottles.
- Utilizes space that otherwise might not be used.

Under-Shelf Hanging Basket

- Great for all size water bottles.
- Able to be stored in many places.



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Written March 2024 by Kari Helgoe, NDSU Family & Community Wellness Extension Agent, and Jadah Poepping, Center for 4-H Youth Development Student Worker

Wearable Technology

Wearable Technology

The background of the cover features a close-up, slightly blurred photograph of several people's wrists. They are all wearing smartwatches. One watch in the foreground is black, another is white, and a third is bright blue. The image is partially obscured by a large green diagonal shape that covers the top right and bottom right portions of the cover.

2023 Revised Edition By:
Matthew Hibdon
Cheryl Varnadoe

WHAT IS WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?



Wearable technology describes any electronic device that consumers can wear on their body. "Wearables" have currently grown to include items ranging from smart watches to medical technology to jewelry to clothing.

Wearables can meet a variety of needs for consumers today and represent one of the largest growth areas for consumer electronics.

HOW DOES WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY WORK?

Wearable gear integrates the form and functions of multiple devices. Most of these work in a similar manner but some in a variety of options. Multiple sensors capture changes the wearer's position, temperature, etc. and translate them into data. Then, microprocessors extract, transform, and load data to a transmittable format. Finally, transmitters wirelessly send data to a local device or cloud storage for further processing and reporting.



GENERAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

With so many brands offerings comparable wearable devices, choosing the right one takes careful research and planning. There are features to compare, different prices to consider, and product reviews to check. Before purchasing, you should consider the following factors:

PURPOSE

Before you purchase any wearable tech, it's important to consider why you want it. Do you want an easier way to track your health, fitness or sleep habits? Do you want a device that can help you stay safe or keep you in touch with others? Knowing the qualities that you must have from your purchase will help you narrow down the number of choices.

BUDGET

With more companies offering smart wearables, there are affordable and low-cost devices as well as new and innovative products available. Carefully compare the features you need in relation to the product price in order to get the best product that is within your budget.

CAPABILITIES

Most smart wearable devices come with basic activity and biometric tracking capabilities. However, other capabilities, such as heart rate tracking, movement sensing, GPS tracking, and blood pressure monitoring, are less universal. Some devices offer both Wi-Fi® and Bluetooth® connectivity, while some only offer one or the other. Wearable devices can be water-resistant, waterproof, or swim proof. The list of capabilities varies by device type. Knowing which ones are ideal for your activities and needs is critical to your purchase decision.

USER EXPERIENCE

If a wearable device is uncomfortable to wear, the potential health benefits you can enjoy are undermined. Likewise, if the wearable device's user interface is frustrating or hard to navigate, you may stop using your device altogether. To find out this information, check out consumer reviews of the product.

BATTERY LIFE

The battery life of wearables varies greatly ranging from days, weeks, or even months on a single charge. In some devices, longer battery life comes with tradeoffs including limited capabilities. Consumers should consider the length of battery life, the type of charger needed, amount of time needed to charge the device and emergency communication capability with minimal or empty charge. Wearables should also be energy-efficient.

PERSONAL STYLE

For some people, clunky devices or headsets are the image that comes to mind when they think about wearable technology. While many brands specialize in offering affordable devices that prioritize practicality over looks, some companies do pay more attention to the style and fashion aspects of wearable technology. Today, wearable consumers have many choices, with tech devices that offer state-of-the-art technology along with fashion.

COMPATIBILITY

Consider if your new wearable will take the place of any of your existing devices and how it integrates and works with other devices you already own. Even if it is lightweight and convenient, another wearable is another device to carry and keep track of. Considering how your new wearable affects your existing network of devices results in better planning and results in a better buying decision.

PRODUCT REVIEWS

Before you make the final decision on any device, reading reviews assures about its reliability and effectiveness, as well as answers any last-minute questions you might have. Product reviews from tech experts are helpful to learn more about the product's capabilities and specifications, while consumer reviews can reveal any potential issues or annoyances with the user experience. Reviews are especially important to consider if you are buying from a less reputable, new, or unknown brand to be certain the advertised experience is delivered.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?

Here are the most common current types of wearable technology:

- **Fitness trackers:** Smart wearable that can assist in developing healthier habits by giving a pat on your back. Monitors your heart rates and your movements and keeps track of your calorie burns and step counts and more.
- **Smart watches:** Connected watches that let the wearer answer phone calls, track fitness, track sleep, and much more.
- **Smart jewelry:** Tech jewelry including rings, bracelets, pins, charms, and necklaces that offer the functions of a smart watch or various special functions such as monitoring stress levels.
- **Advanced medical tech:** Includes a wide range of devices including wearable electrocardiograms (ECGs) that send your heart rhythm to your cardiologist, glucose monitors, and other lifesaving on-body technology.
- **Head-Mounted Displays (HMDs) and Smart Glasses:** Including VR headsets and other displays that create a more immersive gaming or web-surfing experience and wearable devices that utilize augmented reality to add digital displays and quick actions including video capability to glasses.
- **Action cameras:** Small, rugged, waterproof digital cameras designed for capturing immersive action shots that allow you to jump right in and become part of the adventure.
- **Wireless Headphones or Earbuds:** High-tech over-the-ear or in-ear devices that do more than transmit audio and sync up with your phone, tablet, computer, tv or other Bluetooth-enabled devices.

While there are similar criteria to consider across all types of wearable technology, each category has its own set of features and functionalities for consumers to know about.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?

FITNESS TRACKERS

Fitness trackers are some of the original technology in the industry. The earliest trackers were pedometers which had the main feature of only tracking movements and steps. Pedometers have historically been the most widely available and mass-produced type of wearable technology.

Fitness tracking wristbands are a more modern and complex device that built upon the success of pedometers. They measure and record data related to the wearer's physical state and performance, such as heart rate, speed and distance traveled, sleep patterns, and more. Consider any extra costs for internet, location, etc., and ease of use of a mobile app and syncing.

Features: detailed understanding of workout sessions; tracks heart rate, sleep cycle, blood oxygen saturation, and calories burned; detailed reviews of particular exercises or sports; hydration monitor; steps; distance traveled; GPS; compass; accelerometer; temperature; media player; and more.

Consider:

- o Uses
- o How to access/share data
- o Durability
- o Accessories
- o Your lifestyle
- o Cost
- o Charging method
- o Water resistance



WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?

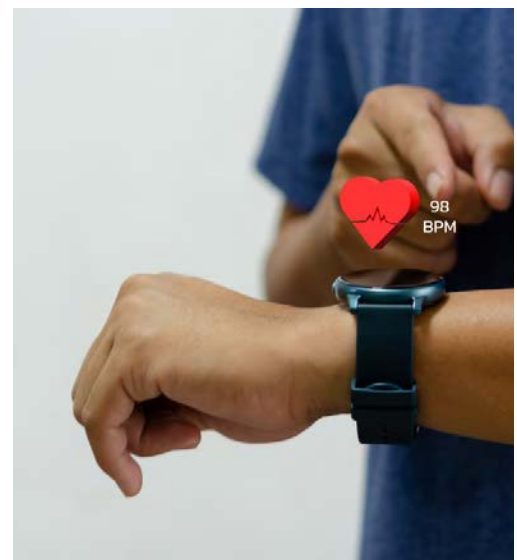
SMART WATCHES

Smart watches primarily tell time while also displaying information supplied by the wearer's smartphone, such as email, social media notifications, SMS/MMS, call info, and media controls. Some smart watches also make and receive calls, take pictures, include games, allow for contactless payments, and provide some of the features of a fitness tracker. More advanced smart watches pair with other wearables (like wireless headphones) without even requiring the use of a smartphone or other primary device.

Features: Showing time, tracking weather data, fitness tracking, games, media player, compass, GPS, speaker, camera, phone, altimeter, accelerometer, barometer, and endless apps to make this a true mini-phone or computer (with proper connectivity).

Consider:

- o Uses
- o How to access/share data
- o Durability and Water resistance
- o Accessories
- o Your lifestyle
- o Cost
- o Need for separate cellular plan?
- o Ability to customize interface
- o Charging method



WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?

SMART JEWELRY

Features: safety signals and alerts, calorie burn, distance traveled, active minutes, sleep duration and quality, guided meditation, stress resistance monitoring, medical monitoring, location sharing and more.

Consider:

- o Cost
- o Does the jewelry item need to be "smart"?
- o Eco-friendly and recyclable product material
- o Non-corrosive material
- o Easy to sync app
- o Easily operable app
- o Comfortable to wear
- o Personal style of wearer
- o Water resistance



WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?



ADVANCED MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Features: wearable electrocardiograms (ECGs) that send your heart rhythm to your cardiologist; temperature sensors; blood pressure monitors; biosensors; physical movement tracking; glucose level monitoring; Ultraviolet (UV) light exposure, and much more.

Consider:

- o Cost
- o Health and medical needs in consultation with your physician/specialist
- o Health and medical history
- o How to access/share data
- o Easily operable app?
- o Comfortable to wear
- o Size/weight
- o Water resistance
- o Durability
- o Need for additional accessories?

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?



HEAD-MOUNTED DISPLAYS (HMDS) AND SMART GLASSES

Features: Equipped with a small display or projection technology embedded into eyeglasses or sunglasses or mounted on a hat or helmet; superimposes images on a real-world view without blocking the user's vision; can view output of devices like drones in real-time; include cameras and headphones; can project a computer screen into the corner of your eye; can be prescription glasses; other AR features

Consider:

- o Cost
- o Uses and practicality
- o Comfortable to wear
- o Size/weight
- o Water resistance
- o Durability
- o Charging method
- o Portability
- o Need for a subscription to access features?

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?

ACTION CAMERAS

Rugged action cameras can mount to a helmet, chest harness, tripod, or sporting equipment, and capture video under conditions that most electronic devices are not designed to handle. As technologies continue to develop, some of the features originally designed for action cameras (water resistance, added accessories to enhance the user experience, etc.) are becoming standard for other wearables and smart devices. Action cameras can be used to record video on family vacations, hikes with friends, or underwater wildlife in their natural environment.

Features: Ability to wear and/or mount

Consider:

- o Uses
- o Internal or external memory
- o How to access/share footage
- o Durability
- o Video quality and frame rates
- o Accessories
- o Editing tools and connectivity
- o Your lifestyle
- o Camera features
- o Cost
- o Water resistance



WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY?

WIRELESS HEADPHONES OR EARBUDS

Wireless headphones were already on the market before the term “wearables” became popular; however, they are still a large part of the wearables industry, sometimes referred to as “hearables.” Wearable headphones rely on Bluetooth technology to connect to consumer’s devices and are commonly available in two styles: in-ear (canalphones, canalbuds, and earbuds) or over-the-ear. Some wireless headphones also include internal microphones. The microphones allow consumers to use the wearables to communicate with others. By using wearable headphones with an internal microphone, consumers can conveniently control voice-activated devices and meet with others on professional video conferences on compatible devices.

Features: Use Bluetooth technology to connect to consumer’s devices; commonly available in two styles: in-ear (canalphones, canalbuds, and earbuds) or over-the-ear; some include internal microphones; sound quality; long battery life; noise cancellation; etc.

Consider:

- o Design
- o Comfort
- o Uses / needs
- o Sound quality
- o Cost
- o Durability
- o Water resistance



WHAT ARE RISKS OF WEARABLES?

Consumers under eighteen (18) years old should use wearables under adult supervision. There are three main categories of risks that wearable tech companies and consumers face:

- **Cyber security:** The data transmitted via wearables must be properly secured; otherwise, companies are at risk of class action lawsuits, costly fines, and injury to their reputation. Consumers should make a point to review company privacy policies and stay educated about how their data could be used. Consumers who want to upgrade their wearables should first be certain to remove all personal information from their existing device. Consider recycling these items to prevent e-waste, donating them or reselling them.
- **Bodily injury risks:** Malfunctioning devices can cause injuries, illnesses, and even death to wearers or patients. Manufacturers of defective devices may even face product liability lawsuits.
- **Technology errors and omissions risks:** Companies can be held liable for economic losses from the failure of their devices to work as intended. Some wearable technology may require continual software updates to work at optimal levels.

THE FUTURE FOR WEARABLES

The future for wearables is very bright. Every day brings new advances in technology resulting in exciting, new wearables in the marketplace.

Use these tips to help you make the best consumer decision when purchasing wearable technology that is currently on the market and to think critically about future products.