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RUSSELL ON ...

## Holiday, health — happiness!



Many will be breathing a sigh of relief as the summer holiday season starts. But while a trip abroad may mean a break from work, don't be mistaken – your immune system will be working overtime. Foreign foods, bugs, alcohol and strong sunshine all take their toll on the body's ability to fight infection and stay healthy. If you want to really enjoy yourself and return refreshed, here are nutritionists' top two trade secrets for staying healthy on holiday:

### 1. Eat tomatoes for edible sunscreen

Of course it's essential that you wear sunscreen on foreign holidays, but did you know certain foods also offer protection against the sun's harmful UV rays? Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant from the carotenoid family that has been proven to help your skin's natural defences against sun damage. One study showed that eating a tablespoon (15g) of tomato purée a day before sun exposure reduced burning by as much as 30 per cent. Food sources of lycopene include tomatoes (cooked is best, as it increases the availability of this nutrient), while guava, apricots, watermelon, papaya and pink grapefruit are also lycopene-rich options.

### 2. Friendly bacteria fight foreign bugs

Most of us have suffered from an upset stomach on holiday. You can prime your body to reduce your risk however, by making sure that your intestines' levels of beneficial bacteria are sufficient before you depart. You can pay a fortune for sugar-filled 'health drinks', but one of the cheapest and easiest ways to top up your probiotics levels is by eating 'prebiotic' foods. These are foods that feed the probiotics to allow them to flourish and line your intestines, in order to ward off bugs and aid proper digestion. Good food sources include leeks, garlic, onions, Jerusalem artichokes, chicory roots, bananas and rye. You can also eat probiotic foods that are already rich in good bacteria. These are traditional fermented foods such as live yogurt (or soya yogurt), Japanese miso paste and pickled vegetables.

And, don't forget the body can produce vitamin D from UV rays so stock up well and strengthen those bones.

## GREEN IS THE COLOUR FOR CONFERENCE ASTON



Even graduates are green at Aston.

**Greener than the** competition, Conference Aston is showcasing its environmental credentials to potential suitors at a national exhibition. Conference Aston is Aston University's portfolio of specialist conference and meeting venues based in the centre of Birmingham.

In May it sent a team to join 40 other academic conference venues at the Academic Venue Show, which was run by Venuemasters and took place at the Business Design Centre in London.

Conference Aston aims to emphasise the green credentials of the business when promoting use of the university's facilities to corporate and association buyers from across the UK and abroad.

Paul Bunce, marketing manager at Conference Aston, said: "As an academic venue we have taken a lead on the green side of the business, with an environmental policy in place that demonstrates the entire university's commitment to taking care of the environment.

"Not only that but we re-invest our profits into education, which provides a unique fit for organisations when looking to apply their corporate and social responsibility as well as procurement policies to venue selection."

Conference Aston regularly serves conference, meeting and business-school delegates from kitchens that are able to provide top-quality, locally sourced food for up to 300 diners at one time.