

# Shades Of Green

OPINION

**D**oes your life as a superintendent include: fresh air, plenty of sunshine, birds singing, squirrels and rabbits scampering about the grounds, a babbling brook flowing into the irrigation lake, unlimited golf, free clubhouse lunches *and* a company vehicle?

Or does this picture more accurately reflect your day: blistering heat or freezing cold, driving rain, dry wells and water restrictions, environmentalists screaming, media scurrying about looking for bad news, no time or desire for golf and another family event missed while attending to course demands.

In reality, the lives of most superintendents blend both lifestyles together. It takes a person with a strong constitution and a good sense of humor to balance the pleasure and pain of being a superintendent. The good days are godsend and the bad days ... well, sometimes they come in bunches and nibble at our psyches and bodies.

Take the following advice with a sprinkle of salt substitute from a former superintendent who had double bypass surgery when he was 49 years old and an angioplasty seven years later. Diet, exercise and regular physical examinations are the keystones to maintaining good health. Protect the health you have now so you don't end up paying for it later.

Protecting yourself now means taking 15 minutes in the morning on the Nordic Track or treadmill or simple stretching exercises and crunches to get the blood flowing to the brain. If you can't wait to get to the course, park your golf car and walk a few holes.

It means a banana or an apple or a bowl of cereal for breakfast rather than pancakes and bacon. You can always follow up the healthy food with a couple cups of coffee. Skip as many vending machine lunches/snacks as you can. If you have lunch privileges at the clubhouse, eat more salads and veggies.

I'm not saying you should crash diet, by any means, which causes health problems of its own. What I am suggesting is that you live by the old Greek adage: Everything in moderation.

## Here's to Your Good Health

BY JOEL JACKSON



TAKE TIME NOW TO  
INVEST IN GOOD  
HABITS SO YOU CAN  
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LONG TIME

Reportedly, there is actual medicinal benefit in one or two drinks, but after that drinking becomes counterproductive. As for smoking, the first question the nurses asked me after my bypass surgery was, "Heavy smoker?" My answer was no, but their question should alert you to what they consider an important risk factor for heart disease, based on what comes across the operating table most often.

Since the sun is always with us, wearing sunscreen is common sense. Don't limit it to times when the sun is blazing. The dangerous UV rays can still penetrate your skin even when it's overcast.

Skin cancer seems to be the No. 1 malady I've seen among my peers. Anyone working in an outdoor profession should have a skin cancer screening done annually, particularly because it's treatable when detected early.

If you choose not to protect yourself, how do you pay later? Payment comes in the form of a heart attack or a stroke and a 911 call you hope results in a happy ending. Or it is a chunk of your ear, your nose or your lung being lopped off to save the rest of your body from being taken over by the Big C.

On the mental side, I'll simply share this thought. We superintendents are, by nature, great worriers about our course conditions. I read an anonymous quote recently that sums up most of our attitudes succinctly: "Don't tell me worrying doesn't help. Most of the things I worry about never happen."

Take the time now to invest in good health habits, so you can be around to take care of your family and your golf course for a long time.

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