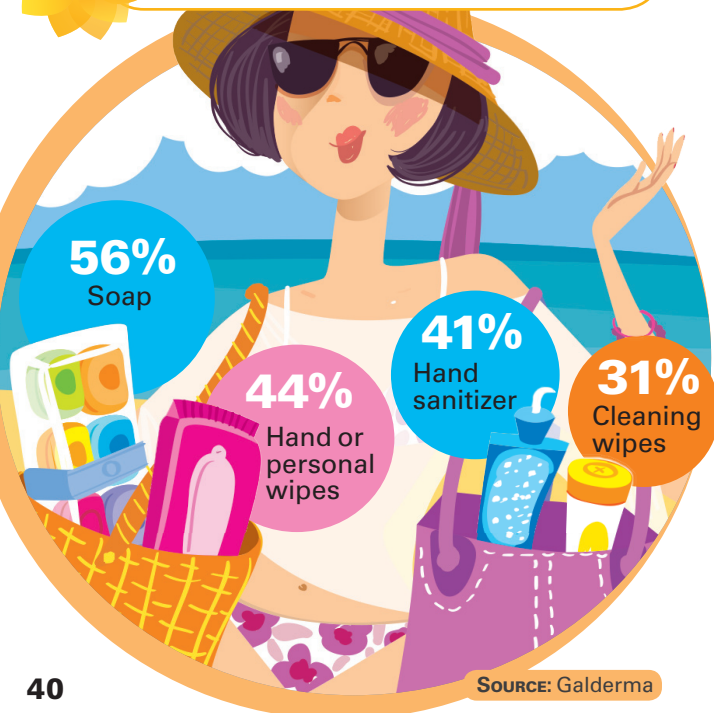


# News: 3 easy keys to speed your thyroid

"Healthy" seasonal habits can slow the thyroid, leaving you foggy, fatigued and battling stubborn pounds. Here, the simple tweaks that power up the gland so you feel amazing

Your thyroid is in the driver's seat when it comes to how fast or slow your metabolism—and the rest of your body—works. And the gland can pump the breaks and slow down with little notice. For many women, that slowdown is happening right now. The reason, says Richard Shames, M.D., author of *Thyroid Mind Power*: Some summertime habits have a surprisingly negative effect on the gland. "It's common for women to experience low-thyroid symptoms like fatigue, heat intolerance, irritability, weight gain or brain fog," notes Dr. Shames. He adds that many women who see a doctor get a clean bill of health and remain untreated since not all tests are accurate. (If you suspect slow thyroid, he advises four tests—Free T<sub>4</sub>, Free T<sub>3</sub>, TSH and TPO antibody.) To help you avoid this health trap, we asked experts to identify top summer thyroid sappers—and the simple heroes that optimize health.

## quick take Cleaning products that Americans take on vacation



## Thyroid hero A water swap

When temperatures rise, water consumption follows. But the more water we drink, the more fluoride we ingest since the chemical is added to 70 percent of the U.S. water supply. The problem: Research suggests that fluoride stops the body from absorbing and using iodine—a mineral crucial for thyroid function. "Your body simply can't produce thyroid hormones without iodine," says Sara Gottfried, M.D., author of *The Hormone Reset Diet*. "It's vital." As fluoride levels in the body rise, iodine stores drop and the thyroid slows. To avoid this, Dr. Shames advises looking for the words *de-ionized*, *purified* or *distilled* on the label of bottled water—these products contain just trace amounts of fluoride.

## Thyroid hero This seafood

Fresh fish is one of summer's healthiest staples, but some of our favorites, including tuna and swordfish, are high in mercury. "Mercury is a heavy metal that accumulates in the thyroid, interfering with minerals key to thyroid hormone production," notes Dr. Gottfried. "Mercury can also trigger an autoimmune response, leading directly to a hypothyroid condition." But instead of nixing seafood, she advises keeping consumption to 2 or 3 servings a week (that's about 12 oz. total) and opting for low-mercury varieties like shrimp, scallops and salmon. These picks are rich in iodine as well as selenium, another mineral that is essential to peak thyroid performance.

## Thyroid hero Sunbathing sans SPF

For decades we've been warned to apply sunscreen before stepping into the summer sun. Why that's bad advice when it comes to the thyroid: "Thyroid hormone doesn't function unless there's a molecule of vitamin D right there with it," says Dr. Shames. In fact, studies have shown that up to 72 percent of people with thyroid disorders are deficient in D—and the best way to get D is to lounge in the sun. The body makes upwards of 10,000 IUs with minimal exposure to UV light—and that dose is more than enough to ensure thyroid health. Plus, notes Dr. Gottfried, "Once you have enough vitamin D, your body stops production. That doesn't happen when you get vitamin D from a pill." She suggests full exposure to the midday sun for 15 minutes, then applying a broad-spectrum SPF 30. ✨