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It's tough being healthy

For every silver lining there's a dark cloud overhead, and never have we been made more aware of this than in these health and safety-conscious times.

We were sitting on the deck between showers with friends last week, talking about the vagaries of this summer's weather. Assuming a positive attitude which doesn't come naturally, but which is necessary these days to maintain one's sanity, I ventured to suggest that with the lack of sun, at least we were avoiding skin cancer.

Just then, another downpour interrupted our discussion. "Yes," answered my friend caustically as we scrambled to rescue the chair covers, "but this stuff is probably full of acid."

We'd just finished a delicious meal of broiled garlic chicken. As far as I could tell, there wasn't even a hint of pinkness to suggest salmonella, but that comforting fact was offset by fears of what the fumes from the gas barbecue were doing to our internal organs.

At least we hadn't eaten hamburgers, in view of the dangers lurking in medium ground when it's not thoroughly cooked. As it is we've had to cut out the potentially lethal egg yolk in our Caesar salad, and we never leave an oil and garlic



kate's corner

kate gilderdale

mixture on the counter, lest we inadvertently dispatch our nearest and dearest to the hospital emergency department.

The latest health reports make one wonder how the human race has survived thus far. Perhaps we should just shut the door and curl up in front of the television, thus avoiding potentially fatal situations such as inhaling car fumes or being run down by a skateboard.

Or will the ensuing lack of essential exercise pose an even greater threat than the ultraviolet rays waiting to zap us the minute we set foot outside? It's not that I don't appreciate the efforts of scientists and safety experts to protect us; it's just that I'd like a unanimous opinion on which course of action is least likely to cause irrevocable damage.

With the proliferation of media and rapid advances in technology, it's hardly surprising we're learning more about the problems as well as the benefits of living in the modern world. And I know I should be

grateful for that. But sometimes it's difficult to accept the latest findings, especially since they're often contradicted the minute they're released.

When my children were little, you felt like a criminal if you didn't cram them full of vitamins, even when they were on a healthy diet. Since then, the virtues of vitamin supplements are hotly debated, with some experts still claiming they're essential while others saying they're not only unnecessary, but dangerous.

Jogging was once hailed as the perfect exercise. But when potential side effects were found to include fatal heart attacks, people turned to aerobics. Naturally it turned out that this form of exercise could also be fraught with unimaginable hazards which left over-eager enthusiasts hobbling painfully along on permanently damaged ankles.

Maybe we should ignore the modern experts' advice and heed the suggestion of earlier sages: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

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WONDERLAND

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