

# The skinny on summer

As June heralds the beginning of summer, so we humans begin our own rituals. We think of days at the beach and wearing more revealing clothes, and immediately our thoughts go to “weight gain. How did I put on those extra pounds?”

I would like to share my own secret for losing a couple of pounds. What I have discovered, quite by accident, is that if I weigh myself on one part of my bathroom floor, and then move the scale to another part of the floor, the scale shows that I have lost two pounds. That is my secret.

Yes, of course, this is delusional thinking. And you have to be careful if you tell the same person every day that: “Oh I lost a couple of pounds today.” By the end of the year they will presume that you must have weighed more than 600 pounds at the beginning of the year.

They will also notice that you have not been practicing girth control.

In addition to weight, summer also leads us to drinking alcoholic beverages. We think of cookouts and parties, and imagine ourselves sipping a glass of wine or having a beer. What’s the truth about alcohol?

Decades ago, I asked my doctor, the late Thaddeus Sewinski, what he thought about drinking. Without hesitation he replied: “Well, Father Joe, we doctors discovered that there were more old drunks than there were old doctors.” Today, experts pretty much agree that one or two glasses of wine a day may actually be beneficial.

My own succinct advice: If you don’t drink, don’t start. If you do drink, drink less. If you can’t stop, get help. Alcoholics Anonymous works because we rely on a higher power to overcome our lower impulses. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!

What about exercise? Recently I heard a woman interviewed on public radio regarding aging. She herself is in her 70s. She said that she never follows the latest medical procedures because future research will show something better. She never follows the latest diet because future research will show all that’s wrong with the

diet. But she does exercise. She called herself a “gym rat.” My suggestion is that even mild exercise is better than no exercise.

Finally, allow me to close with a quote from my friend Jane, of Oak Crest. A retired nurse, Jane is 96 years old. She said to me one day: “Father Joe, all of my life people told me what I should do or not do, what I should eat or not eat.” She paused and added: “Joe, they’re all dead. Eat what you want. Do what you want.”

Jane is an extremely kind person, so I will close with my final prescription for living: Do all the good you can, for as many people as you can, for as long as you can. If you do that, you may not just live longer. You may live forever.