Pokémon Go—health benefits and safety tips

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Since its recent release, Pokémon GO has captured the attention of players across the world. With thousands answering the call to "catch 'em all," Baylor College of Medicine's Dr. Irvin Sulapas discusses the game's health benefits and offers his tips on how to stay safe while playing the game.

Sulapas, an assistant professor of family and community medicine at Baylor and primary care sports medicine physician, explains that the game is beneficial to players' health because it is getting users moving.

"The whole premise of the game is to catch digital Pokémon in the real world. It is attached to one's GPS and then you walk around and try to find random Pokémon for you to catch," Sulapas said. "It forces individuals to get out of the house and walk."

According to Sulapas, the game also includes a feature that allows players to hatch Pokémon from eggs, but in order to hatch the eggs players must walk between 2 to 5 kilometers, or about 1 to 3 miles.

Exercise is not the only health benefit Pokémon GO provides. Sulapas explains how the game encourages social interaction and can bring someone out of their shell.

"Instead of playing the game indoors, watching TV, it forces you to go out and interact," Sulapas said. "It is very popular, so chances are you may see someone else playing Pokémon and have a common bond to share or have a common topic for a small conversation."

While exercise and [social interaction](#) are two possible [health benefits](#) of the game, Sulapas also warns that the game does have possible health and safety risks.

Sulapas recommends following general heat and outdoor safety precautions when playing the [game](#). These include wearing sunscreen, staying well hydrated, watching for cars and staying on sidewalks.

He also cautions players to be aware of their surroundings and where they are.

"Try not to go places you normally wouldn't go. There have been some instances where people have trespassed by hopping the fence of a neighbor's backyard or they have gone to a closed or run down dangerous location," Sulapas said. "Always use common sense when you're looking to find some Pokémon."

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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