



Hamilton Family Health Team

Green Initiative

Nature for Health



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Encourage your patients to connect to better health through nature!

1. Nature has preventative health benefits and can decrease symptoms from a wide range of mental and physical diseases.
2. Park Prescriptions, or PaRx, is a program launched by the BC Parks Foundation to help us prescribe nature. An example prescription and process are below.

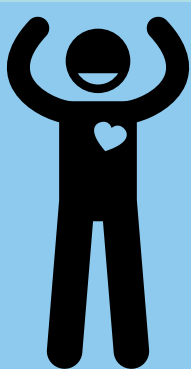


1. Health Benefit

There is a body of literature reviewed by the PaRx program detailing the benefits of nature for chronic disease and physical and mental health.



Chronic Disease Control:
Respiratory,^{1, 2} Heart Disease,¹
Diabetes,³ Cancer^{1, 4, 5, 6, 7}



Risk Mitigation: General Wellness,^{4, 5} Immunity,^{8, 9, 10}
Excess Weight¹¹



Healthy Mind: Stress Reduction,^{12, 13, 14} Improved Mental Health^{14, 23} & Attention¹⁵



Healthy Pregnancy,¹⁶
Children,^{17, 18} and Youth^{19, 20}



Elder Health^{21, 22}

These benefits include very few requirements:

- No necessary physical activity when in nature to see results
- "Nature time" can be any time in any amount of nature that the client finds meaningful¹²

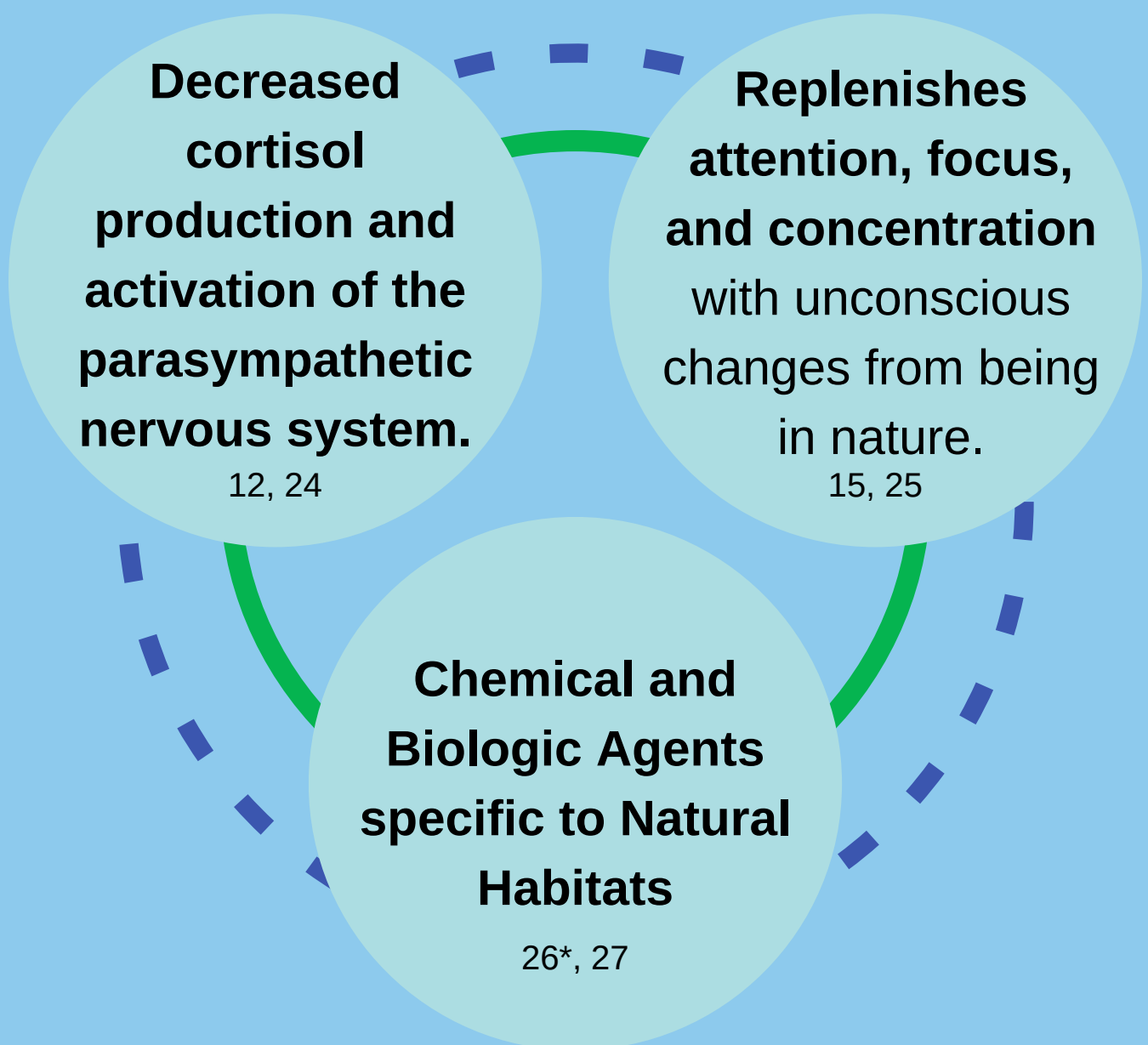
When prescribing nature, be aware that patients may have obstacles to being outside, including but not limited to physical, psychological, cultural, or concerns regarding safety.



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How Does it Work? Some Theories:



Spending time in nature not only benefits the health of individuals, but has been shown to improve pro-social behaviour and social bonds, as many enjoy nature with others.^{2, 28, 29}

*A mechanism map from this study has been appended.

2. Park Prescriptions

PaRx, or Park Prescriptions, a program from British Columbia, has a pathway to help us prescribe nature. The program provides evidence-based recommendations and resources to prescribers, as well as a personalized PaRx prescription and instructions for how to prescribe and log prescriptions on the parkprescriptions.ca website. Patients who receive a prescription “fill” it by spending time in nature, and both providers and patients can win prizes!

We have a digital prescription you can use to prescribe nature as evidence shows a written prescriptions are powerful.³⁰

We have created a [PaRx EMR-embedded EDoc and EForm](#).



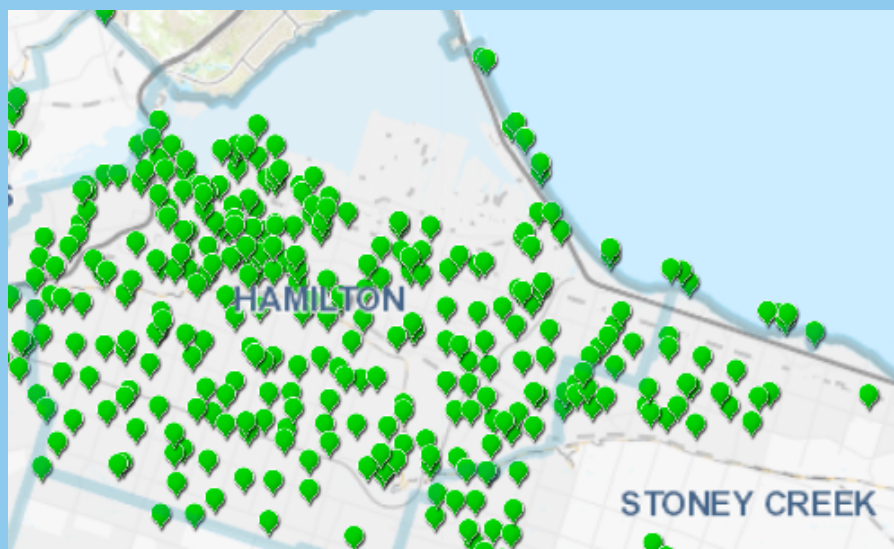
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To log your Rx you can either use the HFHT Provider ID: *ON MD 001* that is currently pre-loaded on the digital tool, or sign up online to receive your own unique number. See our [how-to video on Park Prescriptions here](#).

BC Parks is developing a patient-facing portal on their website. When available, you can log your patient's Rx so that they can access their own portal on parkprescriptions.ca using the provider ID, date, and their initials as listed on your PaRx.



Many individuals don't know where their closest parks are, so we integrated this [map of Hamilton parks](#) into our Nature Prescriptions for our EMRs.

Patient Resources and Motivators:

[Health Benefits of Nature: Waiting Room Video](#)

[Get the Kids Outside](#)

[World Walking app/website](#)

[McMaster's Just Walk Program](#)

[Forest Therapy Programs](#)

[Plant 1 Tree per Patient Seen](#)

Additional Readings

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- Maller C, Townsend M, Pryor A, Brown P, St Leger L. [Healthy nature healthy people: 'contact with nature' as an upstream health promotion intervention for populations](#). Health Promotion International. 2006;21(1):45-54.

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Join the HFHT Green Initiative, and access all infographics, videos, and other resources at:
[HFHT Green Initiative Webpage](#)

If you have any questions, please reach out to us: green.team@hamiltonfht.ca

Name _____

Date _____

My Outdoor Activity Plan (2 hours/week, 20+ minutes at a time):



Health Professional's Signature

Prescription #: ON-MD001 – _____ – _____
(YYMMDD) (Patient's Initials)

Register your PaRx for a chance to win prizes.
Head to PARKPRESCRIPTIONS.CA



Endorsed by

Ontario College of
Family Physicians 

 **RNAO**

 **SGFP**
ONTARIO SOCIETY OF GENERAL & FAMILY PHYSICIANS

 **npac**
NURSE PRACTITIONERS' ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

 **afhto** association of family health teams of ontario

Park Rx:

For a Healthy You and a Healthy Planet



2 hours/week, 20+ minutes at a time: that's all it takes!

The Benefits of Nature Time

For Adults

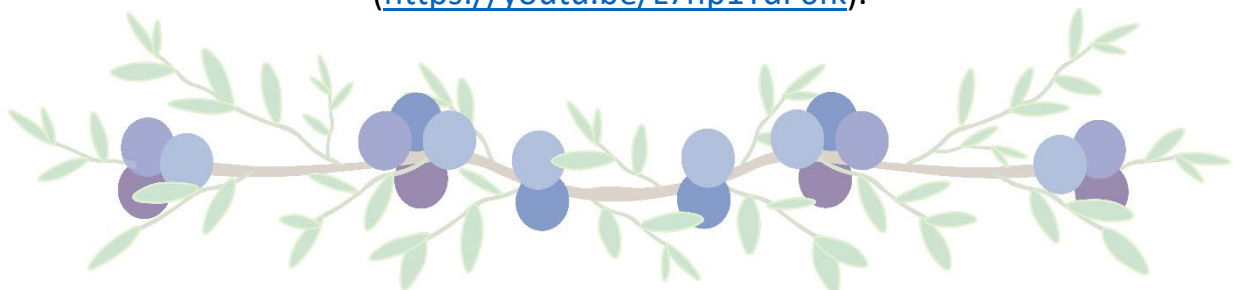
- ✓ Reduce Blood Pressure (if elevated)
- ✓ Reduce health effects of excess weight
- ✓ Reduce lung disease symptoms
- ✓ Reduce asthma symptoms
- ✓ Decrease risk of heart disease & stroke
- ✓ Improve immunity
- ✓ Reduce blood sugar in people with diabetes and diabetes risk
- ✓ Improve mental health
- ✓ Increase feelings of wellbeing
- ✓ Reduce stress
- ✓ Feel younger
- ✓ Reduce dementia & improve cognition
- ✓ Have a healthier pregnancy
- ✓ Improve some cancer outcomes

For Children & Youth

- ✓ Better brain & physical development
- ✓ Reduce asthma symptoms & allergies
- ✓ Healthier weight
- ✓ Improve coordination
- ✓ Improve mental health & resilience
- ✓ Feel more confident
- ✓ Decrease stress
- ✓ Improve social cooperation
- ✓ Improve grades
- ✓ Improve focus at school
- ✓ Reduce ADHD symptoms
- ✓ Improve immune system

Check your local library to see if you can borrow a **park** pass for free!

Watch [our short video](#) to learn more about the health benefits of time in **nature** (<https://youtu.be/L7hp1YdF6fk>).



PaRx

One Solution to

Fatigue

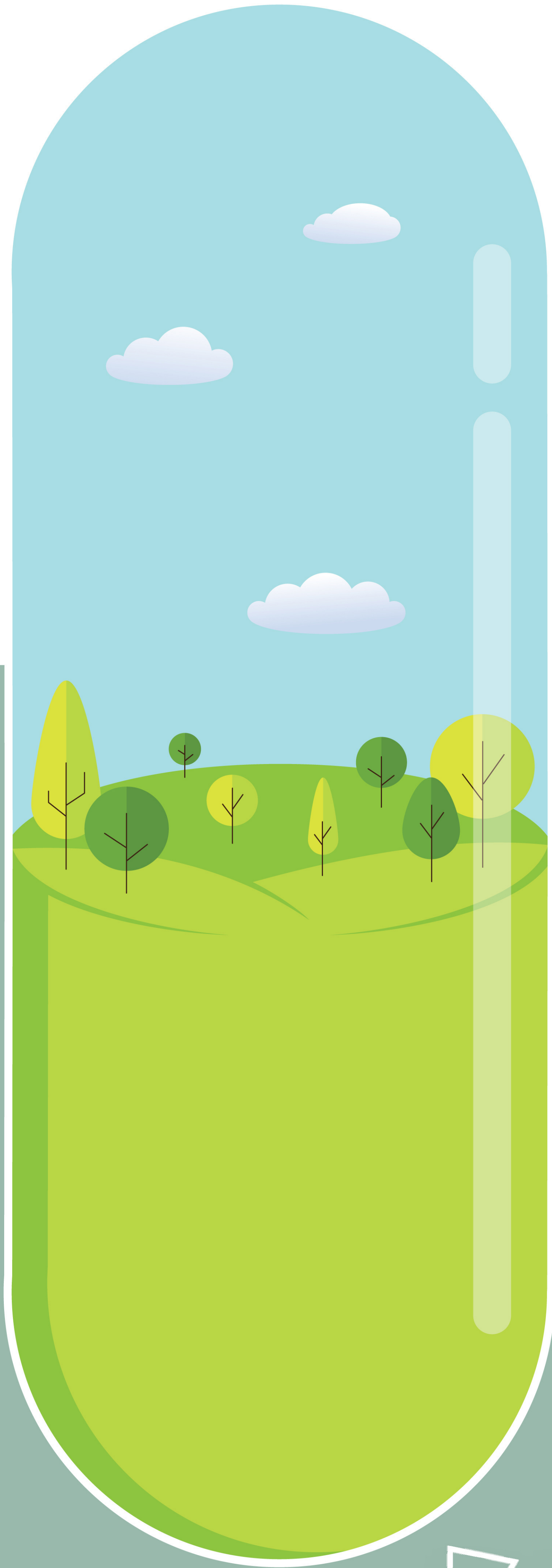
Anxiety

Tension

Stress

Pain reduction

Heart health



Learn more
about PaRx at
www.parkprescriptions.ca



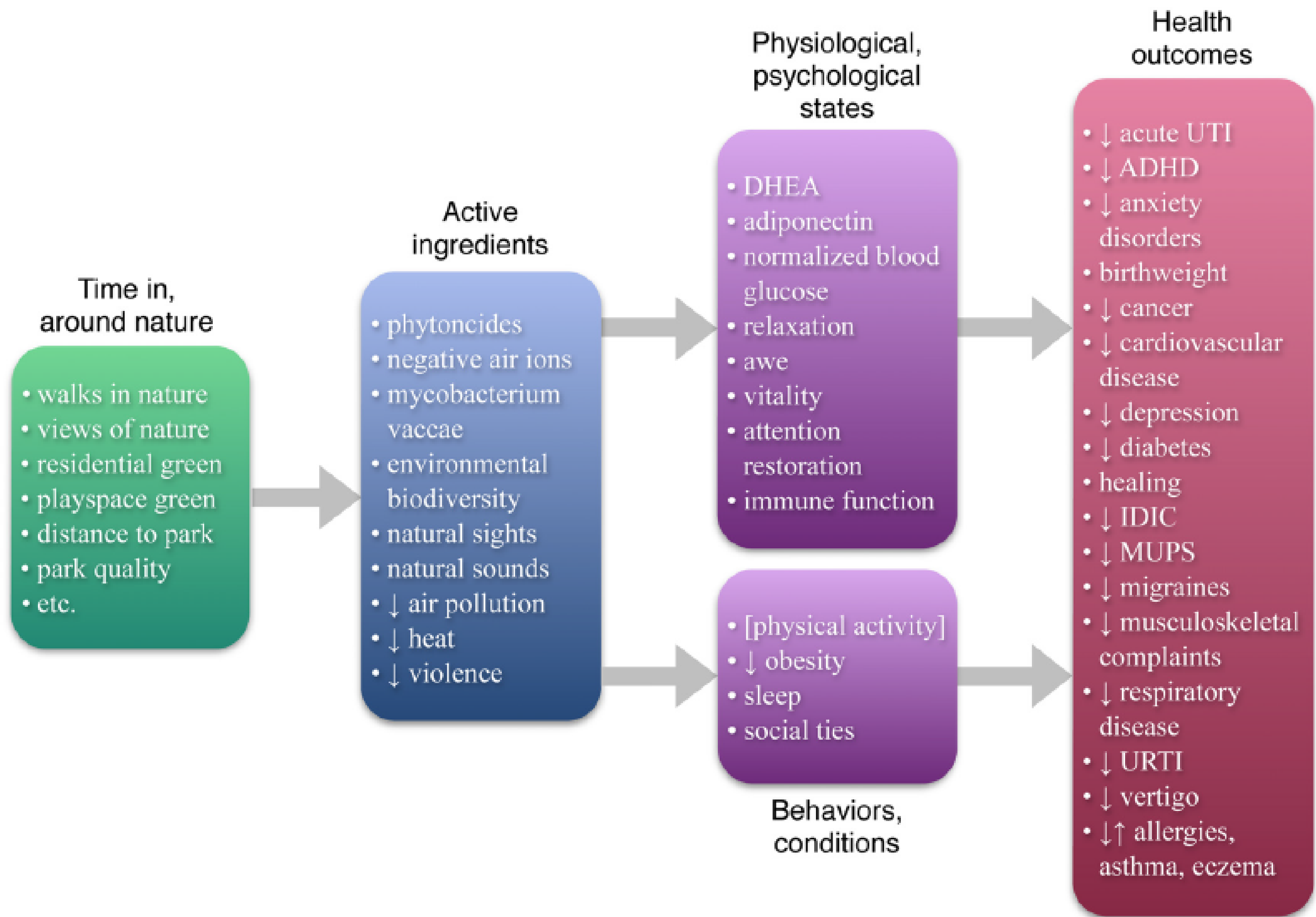


FIGURE 1 | The nature-health link: filling in the details. This Figure summarizes the state of the scientific literature on nature and health, listing (1) the “active ingredients” in nature that have been identified as having impacts on health or health antecedents; (2) physiological/psychological states, behaviors, and conditions tied to both nature and health; and (3) specific health outcomes that have been tied to nature (controlling for socioeconomic variables). Note that

physical activity (in brackets) is only sometimes tied to nature; and that allergies, asthma, and eczema are sometimes positively and sometimes negatively tied to nature. DHEA: didehydroepiandrosterone; acute UTI: acute urinary tract infection; ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; IDIC: infectious disease of the intestinal canal; MUPS: medically unexplained physical symptoms; URTI: upper respiratory tract infection.