



The Transition to College: Taking care of yourself

Leaving for college marks a major transition in most student lives. Leaving home, leaving high school, leaving old friends can become very stressful for some of you. Arriving to college signifies momentous changes; exploring a new place, making new friends, learning new things, and making your own decision. The more you are prepared is the more ready you are to confront new pressures. College can be hard; the courses are at a higher level than high school and material are presented at a faster rate. Give yourself an opportunity to adjust gradually to the new academic demands. Look for courses that will be harder and others that will be less intense. In other words, you want to balance your classes and not choose all difficult classes together.

You are responsible for managing your money and taking care of your health. Getting enough sleep, eating well, and generally taking care of yourself will give you enough energy to enjoy what college has to offer without having to be stressed and burned out. Let us look at some points to better help you take care of your health.

1. **Find time for sleep:** Sleep is often overlooked but it is very important. Try to get at least 6-8 hrs of sleep a night. This might sound like a lot to you when you have many assignments to do, but sleep is important. The mind rejuvenates at rest and enough sleep will help you feel refreshed and relaxed in the morning.
2. **Eat at least 3 meals a day:** Work in a healthful snack such as fruits and vegetables between meals. This will keep your blood sugar stable. I know college life calls for eating quick snacks but please make sure it is a healthy one. You can eat foods such as peanuts, raisins, carrots etc. These foods will give your body the vitamins it needs to function.
3. **Exercise is important:** Exercise keeps the body relaxed and stress free. When the body exercises, it burns the toxins that build up during stress. In addition, it helps the mind to stay focus. Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day three to five days a week if possible.
4. **Fun/Relaxation:** Amidst all the final exams, and assignments make sure to have some fun. Do something that you enjoy at least once a week to help keep your mind relax and reduce stress. Try not to over do having fun when you have finals and assignments due but take some time to relax. This is part of your everyday living.
5. **Connect with loved ones:** Do not forget to make time for family and friends. Take some time each week to connect to the people who matter the most to you.

Call a friend you could talk to or study with. Talk to counselors with whom you can discuss personal concerns, they can make suggestions for whatever problems you might have. Visit the health services to see the nurse or the physician if you have or suspect a medical problem.

The good news is that when you adjust to college life, it can open new doors to all kinds of learning and living experiences. Take care of yourself and good luck this semester.

Written by Ronda Herbert, RN, BSN
Health Services Supervisor
(340) 693-1124

