

Tips for College Health and Safety

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

The college years are exciting, but they can also be stressful. Between studying, making friends, and going to class, it can be hard to find time to care for your health. By taking the following daily steps, you can be safer and healthier through your college years and beyond.

Be active. Get at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. If it's hard to find 30 minutes all at once, do it in several shorter sessions throughout the day.

Eat regular, balanced meals, and limit junk food. Eat healthy snacks, such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts. If you're concerned about your weight, talk to a doctor or nurse about how to lose or gain it gradually and safely. If you or someone you know has signs of an eating disorder, get help.

Avoid using tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Regardless of what you've seen or heard, none of these substances improves your life or helps you cope. Smoking causes cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other problems. Alcohol contributes to the leading causes of injury-related death in 12-20 year-olds. Find out what resources your college has to help you avoid substance use.

Get 8 hours of sleep each night, and keep a regular sleep schedule. Getting enough sleep will help you perform better during the day. It will also help you lower your risk for automobile injuries, poor grades, depression, and other problems.

Avoid sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs. The surest way to avoid transmission of STDs is to abstain from sexual intercourse, or to be in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected. Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can lower the risk of transmission of some STDs. If you're sexually active, get tested for STDs and HIV infection.

Manage stress. Figure out what may be causing your stress and what you can do to lower stressors. Changing schedules, using relaxation techniques, setting realistic goals, and staying active may help. Also, think positively. We are often much harder on ourselves than we need to be. Develop a circle of friends for support. Participate in campus activities that give you the opportunity to express yourself and meet new people with similar interests.

If you have questions or concerns about your health or safety, talk to a doctor, nurse, counselor, religious leader, or other person who can help.

For more college health and safety tips, visit www.cdc.gov/family/college.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.