healthy you

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FALL/WINTER 2023 VOL. 24 ISSUE 1

WHY PLANTS MAKE THE **BEST ROOMMATES**

THE BENEFITS OF GREENERY IN DORM ENVIRONMENTS

MICROWAVE USAGE

UNDERSTANDING MICROWAVE SAFETY

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CONTACT US
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Healthy You welcomes letters to the editor and story ideas. Healthy You is a student-run health magazine of the Department of Public Health. It is funded by Syracuse University David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. This publication enhances, broadens and supports the academic and social experiences of students. The Student Editorial Board is responsible for providing work structure for the magazine's production, which includes the content, design, production and distribution.

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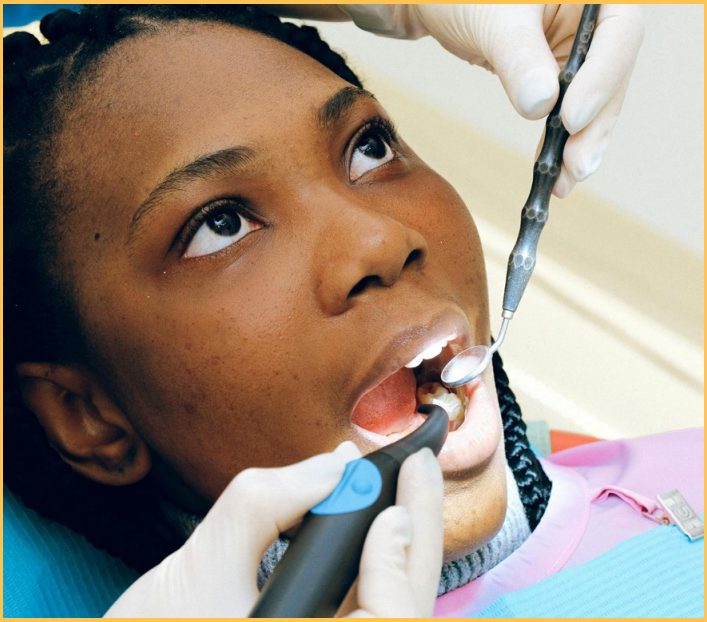
By Luvenia W. Cowart and Shelby Fenton

RACISM LINKED TO DENTAL ANXIETY AND FEAR AMONG BLACK WOMEN



According to a recent article published in *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, oral health may be inadequate or delayed due to fear and anxiety associated with racial experiences among Black women. The study found that this anxiety, which reaches beyond fear of needles and drilling, is linked to experiences of racial discrimination in daily living and housing, work or from law enforcement that before "contributed to elevated dental fear and anxiety among nearly 1 in 5 Black women, more than double the prevalence of dental fear among white women." According to lead author Brenda Heaton, associate professor of epidemiology at Boston University, "Black women with higher levels of dental fear and anxiety said these fears were fueled by a perceived lack of control during dental exams or procedures, painful or uncomfortable procedures, and unsympathetic or unkind dentists." Researchers posit that these stressful experiences only elevate perceived discrimination during a health care visit. The study findings also suggest poorer health outcomes and avoidance of dental services for a population already disproportionately affected by many health disparities in oral health and quality and affordable health care services.

Source: Boston University School of Public Health

HAVE A LAUGH: MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

In a video presentation, clinical psychologist Gabrielle Roberts, from Advocate Children's Hospital in Illinois, points out the impact of laughing on physical and mental health. Roberts strongly encourages family members to participate on a rotating basis in making the other family members laugh. This may look like assigning a schedule where one member oversees producing a laughable minute to share with the rest of the family per week. However, Roberts identifies this schedule as fluid, depending on household dynamics. Roberts' main objective is to identify intentional laughter. Even in times of stress, taking time to find comical clips or review things that may have made you laugh in the past is extremely beneficial to your well-being.

Source: cbsnews.com

INTRODUCING THE NEW **PUBLIC HEALTH CHAIR**

By David Larsen, Ph.D., MPH
Chair and Professor, Department of Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Dear students,

In April 2023, my colleagues elected me as the new chair of the Department of Public Health at Syracuse University. I am excited about the challenges and opportunities ahead as I serve in this role, and I hope to get to know each of you. Please feel free to stop in and say hello.

As you consider your path toward graduation and beyond, I would like to share my circuitous path toward a public health career. As a child, I hated it when people asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. I just gave them my older brother's answer: Air Force pilot. But I didn't care about it as he did and didn't pursue that career. I was a young adult before I knew what an epidemiologist even was.

Professor David Larsen

At Brigham Young University, I studied psychology, principally because it was interesting to me. Perhaps I wanted to be a therapist? During the summer of my junior year, I worked as a backpacking guide for troubled teens at Red Cliff Ascent in Utah. Young people would arrive at this program (or others like it) as an alternative to juvenile detention or at the behest or demand of their parents. Spending a week at a time in the high-altitude desert of southern Utah was amazing, and I took some time off from classes that fall to do my internship at Red Cliff. I learned that I did not want to be a therapist.

My winter job during college was teaching snowboarding at Sundance Ski Resort. If I could have made a decent living as a snowboard instructor, I might have continued that job, but all the older snowboard instructors lived in their vans. It wasn't the life I wanted to pursue. Still, early-morning lift rides provide a great place to think, and I began to reflect more on global health issues I had observed in Brazil a few years prior. After my first year of university, I had served a religious mission for two years in Belém, Brazil, at the mouth of the Amazon River. It took me time to process the poverty that I had experienced in Brazil, including a lack of clean water, no access to basic sanitation and food insecurity. I had no framework for making sense of the situation. Over time, I realized that I wanted to pursue a career in addressing what I know now as social determinants of health and global health disparities.

How does one work on global health disparities? I considered the Peace Corps and applied to master of public health (MPH) programs that offered a master's international and embedded a Peace Corps service into the curriculum. Tulane University felt right, and I decided to attend. Then, in July 2007, my general idea of a career in global health became laser-focused when I saw the *National Geographic* article "Bedlam in the Blood" about malaria.

Here was this mosquito-borne parasite that is entirely preventable and treatable, killing more than 1 million young children every year. Wealthy nations had long ago eliminated malaria, but it plagued and continues to plague sub-Saharan Africa. I became passionate about fighting malaria and joined a research group working on the malaria problem in Zambia. I learned about insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor residual spraying and larval source control.

Throughout my studies, I noticed that malaria control focused on fighting the mosquito while ignoring the parasitic reservoir in the human population. I wrote proposals to study the impact of human-focused malaria control. Fortunately, one of these was funded, and four years after reading that first article on malaria, I was working with the Gates Foundation on a massive malaria testing and treatment trial in southern Zambia. It was a surreal moment. Just four years earlier, I had merely a vague impression of what I wanted to do with my career. Now, I was an epidemiologist, a profession I had not known existed for most of my life.

I hope you will find your "malaria," a problem to inspire you and to which you can dedicate the next few years of your life. Whether your route is circuitous or not, the best lies ahead. With hard work and dedication, in four years it will be fun to reflect on how far you've come.

Sincerely,

David Larsen

Professor Dave Larsen

PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS: WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ACCREDITATION

By Maureen Thompson, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Public Health
Director, Undergraduate Programs in Public Health
Chair, Program Review and Assessment Committee
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Our public health program, consisting of our bachelor of science in public health (B.S.P.H.) and master of public health (MPH) degrees, is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), an independent agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit schools and programs of public health.

WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

In higher education, accreditation is considered a voluntary quality assurance process that colleges and universities undertake to confirm that their academic programs meet high-quality educational standards. Specific to public health accreditation, CEPH says it "assures quality in public health education and training to achieve excellence in practice, research, and service, through collaboration with organizational and community partners" [1]. Accredited status is for a designated period of time. To maintain accreditation, programs apply for re-accreditation before the endpoint of the initial accreditation period. Thus, accreditation is also a form of continuous quality improvement and assurance, whereby schools participate in internal review leading up to the point of re-accreditation.

WHY IS ACCREDITATION IMPORTANT?

Accreditation creates a set of standards that all public health programs follow. It also assures the public, including students, that the degrees provide high-quality and professionally relevant training. Graduates of CEPH-accredited MPH programs are also immediately eligible to sit for the Certified in Public Health exam, a credential awarded by the National Board of Public Health Examiners.

HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY.

In 2016, our bachelor of science in public health was one of the first in New York state to be accredited as a stand-alone bachelor's program, a new accreditation for undergraduate public health programs. In 2021, we were certified as a public health program, including the B.S.P.H. and MPH degrees. We will submit our self-study for re-accreditation in fall 2026 with an anticipated CEPH review in spring 2027.

ENGAGING STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS.

It is important that we involve our students, alumni and community members in our program and evaluation. We seek feedback from these groups through various means, for example, representation on department committees, course feedback surveys, exit surveys, alumni surveys and employer surveys.

What can you do? Review the assessment plan found in your course syllabus. How do the course learning objectives and assignments relate to accreditation criteria and standards? Discuss assignments with course faculty. What knowledge and skills will be demonstrated and how do these relate to accreditation? Ask questions and provide feedback. We depend on you to keep our programs strong.

[1] "About," Council on Education for Public Health, accessed October 25, 2023,

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

ceph.org/about/org-info/

A LOOK INTO GLOBAL HEALTH: HOW A **PUBLIC HEALTH DEGREE** CAN PREPARE YOU FOR A **DIVERSE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

By Cate Willing '22, B.S.P.H., B.A.
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, Alumna
and Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Alumna

When I applied to Syracuse University in 2017 as a public health major, I had yet to learn how I would be setting myself up for success. In fall 2018, I started at Falk College as a public health student, unsure of what would come and what I wanted to do with my life. I had dreams of helping people for the common good, which were only strengthened during my time in the public health program.

Early on, I knew that I didn't want to study public health to become a practicing medical professional. Instead, I knew I wanted to use my knowledge and skills to do my part in solving the world's toughest public health issues. To do this, I paired my public health B.S. with a B.A. in policy studies at Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, a perfect combination of degrees. These skills became even more invaluable when the pandemic hit, as I could digest and navigate public health orders. My public health knowledge continues to equip me with the tools to succeed daily in my career.

Today, I work in health public relations (PR) and communications at Edelman, the world's largest PR agency. Since I didn't study PR or communications, my public health background made my perspective novel among my colleagues, who mainly hold PR backgrounds. If your interests align, joining the workforce—whether it is communications, business or the technology field—with a topic specialization in public health will differentiate you from your colleagues, further supporting your work.

While at Syracuse, my interests were focused on domestic public health issues, including mental health in the U.S., early childhood nutrition and SNAP/EBT programs, and harm reduction programs for addiction. Through research with SOURCE and Professor Bernard Appiah, I was exposed to global public health for the first time in depth. Appiah and I worked with another public health student to conduct a content analysis of COVID-19 responses in the United States, the United Kingdom and Ghana. We accomplished this by analyzing press releases and media communications against the WHO health systems framework to quantify the impact of health communications during pandemic times. Much of the work I do today is similar to this project.

At Syracuse, you can study with a true global perspective. Appiah says that global health is what brought him to Syracuse University: "Here, there is a substantial global focus for students receiving public health training. There are many opportunities to learn about global issues." He is excited to apply his research and subject matter expertise in public health to "shape the future students in the public health program." Working with professors like Appiah at Syracuse exposed me to the world of possibilities within public health.

In my current position as an account executive at Edelman, I support nonprofit organizations, foundations and biotechnology companies focused on media and policy tracking. I've supported global public health outreach and education in Africa through a prominent foundation, supporting activation at the World Vaccine Congress in Washington, D.C. Most recently, I've worked with Stop TB, a hosted entity of the United Nations Office for Project Services, working to end tuberculosis through aligning partner organizations (including international and technical organizations, government programs, research and funding agencies, foundations, NGOs, civil society and community groups, and the private sector). For this project, I leaned on my public health knowledge of public-private partnerships and epidemiology experience in disease.

For the first year and a half of my career, I consistently rely on my background knowledge of public health frameworks, regulatory pathways, health care systems and cultural competence to guide my work. I continue to be amazed at how applicable my major is to my career, and I would recommend a public health degree to anyone interested.

If you'd like to talk more about public health careers, please contact me on LinkedIn or at *cathrynwilling@gmail.com*.

ONE CELSIUS IS EQUAL TO HOW MANY CUPS OF COFFEE?

THE PROS AND CONS OF CELSIUS

By Hannah Cohen-De La Rosa
First-year student, Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Celsius, the enticing energy drink, has become increasingly present on college campuses. Whether found in the vending machines around campus or stashed away in dorm room refrigerators, this beverage has quickly become a go-to source of energy for college students. But what exactly are the benefits and drawbacks of consuming Celsius?

Celsius drinks have infiltrated college life, offering students a caffeinated alternative to coffee. With the promise of "boosting metabolism and energy," Celsius drinks have gained popularity over the past few years. The primary attraction to Celsius is the caffeine content, typically 200 mg of caffeine per can, equivalent to over two 8-ounce cups of coffee. The caffeine content can be beneficial in providing energy boosts for students pulling all-nighters or attending early-morning lectures. However, while caffeine can give individuals a much-needed boost, excessive consumption can lead to jitteriness, anxiety, insomnia and dependence.

For college students already prone to irregular sleep patterns, relying on Celsius should be taken as a precaution. Studies from the University of Oklahoma show that the metabolism enhancement that Celsius claims to have with its natural ingredients, such as green tea extract, guarana and ginger extract, did help individuals lose weight. One study from the University of Oklahoma suggested that "overweight and obese women drinking Celsius before moderate exercise resulted in increased fat loss, increased muscle mass, increased endurance performance with significant improvements to blood lipid profiles when compared to exercise alone" and "sedentary men drinking Celsius before moderate exercise yielded significant improvements in body composition. Participants' results included decreased body fat, increased lean muscle and cardiorespiratory improvements compared to exercise alone."

For individuals consuming Celsius without engaging in physical activity, no studies say Celsius help you lose weight. The convenience of Celsius may encourage unhealthy habits, such as relying on caffeine to stay awake and alert instead of prioritizing a balanced sleep schedule.

For college students, moderation is key. Understanding the ingredients and their effects can help students decide when and how much Celsius to consume. The Celsius website recommends no more than two 12-ounce servings per day and notes that the Food and Drug Administration advises drinking up to 400 mg of caffeine, the equivalent of two 12-ounce cans of Celsius is "safe for most individuals." In addition, this is for all individuals over the age of 18. Joe Whittington, a board-certified emergency medicine doctor, says on a blog post about Celsius drinks: "Those who want to enjoy the drink should stay aware of the potential risks and make informed decisions about their beverage choices to safeguard their health and well-being."

The drink will likely not have favorable side effects for individuals with underlying heart conditions, anxiety or panic disorders, or sleep disorders, he says. In general, the key is to be aware of your health factors and individual tolerance, Whittington says. While Celsius drinks offer an appealing solution for college students seeking an energy boost, it's essential to approach consumption with caution and moderation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.epicwaterfilters.com/blogs/news/are-celsius-drinks-bad-for-you#:~:text=Increased%20Risk%20of%20Heart%20Disease,heartbeat%20and%20high%20blood%20pressure.

www.celsius.com/

DIVERSITY IN YOUR MILK SELECTIONS: **BENEFITS OF VARIOUS PLANT-BASED MILKS**

By Molly Santaniello
First-year student, Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

While working as a barista, I have noticed plant-based milks in coffee becoming increasingly popular among all generations, specifically college-age students.

Initially, plant-based milks were primarily consumed by people with dietary restrictions, but now people are learning about their health benefits and plant-based milks are more mainstream. Different plant-based alternatives can be found in grocery stores for milk, creamers, ice cream and more. They can also be used in coffee, cereal, baking and other forms of cooking. Ranging from oats, almonds, coconut, cashews, soy, sesame and more, each plant-based alternative has a slightly different taste and different nutritional benefits.

Various other plant-based milks are widely accessible to college students in university dining halls. What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Dairy and plant-based alternatives are both healthy, but each carries its nutritional benefits and different amounts of vitamins and minerals. Emma Laing, Ph.D., director of dietetics at the University of Georgia, says, "Most plant-based milk does not contain nutrients comparable to dairy milk." So, if you were relying on dairy milk for your daily intake of vitamin D (necessary to absorb calcium, the building block of bones) and switch to a plant-based alternative, you must acquire vitamin D in another food or supplemental vitamins. Plant-based milks can have comparable amounts of protein, calcium and other vitamins.

VIA HEALTHLINE.COM

These are some of the available milk alternatives on the market, and the Syracuse University campus dining halls provide mini fridges (often located near the cereal bars or beverage station) with some of these options. Students considering dietary restrictions, intolerances, preferences or trying to reduce their carbon footprint still need to ensure they get the proper daily intake of essential nutrients.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.healthline.com/nutrition/healthiest-milk#2.-Oat-milk

www.goodhousekeeping.com/uk/food/food-reviews/g36416480/best-dairy-free-milk/

www.cnet.com/health/nutrition/what-is-the-best-plant-based-milk/

NUT MILK

ALMOND MILK:

- Most popular plant-based milk alternative
- Has little protein
- Also low in calories and fat
- High in minerals like magnesium and calcium
- Contains rich amounts of vitamin E (an important antioxidant)

CASHEW MILK:

- Higher calorie and protein alternative
- Loads of vitamins and minerals (magnesium, iron, vitamin D, etc.)
- Heart-healthy unsaturated fats
- *Healthline* states, Drinking this type of milk may boost heart health, improve blood sugar control, promote eye health and more.

OTHER PLANT MILK

OAT MILK:

- Considered the heart-healthiest plant milk, because of the benefits of oats
- Oats lower cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart disease.
- According to Stacey Smith, senior food and drink editor of *Good Housekeeping*, a glass of oat milk provides 10% of daily recommended iron levels.

SOY MILK:

- Proclaimed to be the most like dairy, nutritionally.
- Has the most protein of all plant-based options
- High in vitamin A, B12 and D as well as minerals.
- FDA and other studies suggest that soy resembles cow's milk the most, in nutritional value, if it is fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

SUGAR-FREE SWEETENERS: ZERO CALORIES, BUT WHAT'S THE TOLL ON YOUR BODY?

By Hannah Cohen-De La Rosa
First-year student, Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

First-year college students constantly seek healthier alternatives to beat the "freshman 15" weight gain. It has become the new norm to read the back of labels and look at the calorie amount, hoping it is as close to zero as possible.

Sugar-free sweeteners have been popular alternatives within the student population, due to their availability in the dining halls. Brands like Splenda, Equal and Sweet'N Low dominate the market, offering an enticing way to satisfy your sweet tooth while cutting calories. But are these sugar-free sweeteners as harmless as they seem?

Sugar-free sweeteners, also known as artificial sweeteners or sugar substitutes, are synthetic compounds designed to mimic the taste of sugar without the added calories. Students see them often used in various products, from diet sodas to sugar-free candy and gum. Splenda, Equal and Sweet'N Low all have different chemical compounds, such as sucralose, aspartame and saccharin, that determine the degree of sweetness in each brand.

While the number zero is enticing and seems the perfect solution for individuals looking to reduce their sugar intake, these sweeteners come with hidden health risks, primarily adverse effects on our metabolism. Research has shown that sugar-free sweeteners disrupt our metabolism. Studies from the Cleveland Clinic and Johns Hopkins Medicine show that the sugar substitutes individuals take may trick the brain into craving more sweet foods, leading to the opposite effect that an individual hopes for when cutting down on calories.

Furthermore, there is an adverse impact on gut health. A journal from the National Library of Medicine stated that the gut microbiome plays a crucial role in overall health. Artificial sweeteners have been shown to alter the composition of gut bacteria, potentially leading to imbalances associated with various health issues, including obesity and metabolic syndrome.

So, how can students satisfy their sweet tooth and maintain a balanced diet without consuming sugar-free sweeteners? Use natural sweeteners like honey, maple syrup or agave nectar in moderation.

While they contain calories, they provide a more wholesome sweetness and can be used sparingly. Whole fruits like berries, apples and oranges offer natural sweetness, essential nutrients, fiber and antioxidants. They are an excellent choice for a satisfying sweet treat. When indulging in desserts, choosing those made with natural sugar in smaller portions allows individuals to enjoy the occasional sweet without relying on sugar substitutes. Gradually reduce the overall sugar intake to allow taste buds to adjust to less sweetness. Over time, it becomes apparent that the human body requires less sugar to satisfy cravings.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS ON HOW TO AVOID SUGAR-FREE SWEETENERS IN THE DINING HALL:

- Read the labels carefully.
- Check the ingredient list of all food and drinks before you eat or drink them. If you see any of the following ingredients, the product contains sugar-free sweeteners: sucralose, aspartame, acesulfame K, neotame, saccharin and stevia.
- Whole foods are less likely to contain sugar-free sweeteners than processed foods. For example, drink water or unsweetened tea instead of diet soda. Instead of eating sugar-free candy, eat fresh fruit or nuts.
- If you have the time, making your meals is a great way to avoid sugar-free sweeteners. You can cook meals and snacks at home using fresh, whole ingredients.

By following these tips, students can satisfy their sweet tooth and maintain a balanced diet without consuming sugar-free sweeteners.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6363527/

www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/artificial-sweeteners/art-20046936#:~:text=Studies%20dating%20back%20to%20the,heart%20disease%20and%20death%20overall.

www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/artificial-sweeteners/art-20046936#:~:text=Studies%20dating%20back%20to%20the,heart%20disease%20and%20death%20overall.

MICROWAVE USAGE: UNDERSTANDING MICROWAVE SAFETY

By Julia Anne Favaro
First-year student, Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Many people view microwaves as an effortless way to heat their instant ramen, while some see them as a risky practice. On a college campus, microwaves are in practically every dorm and serve as students' main source of food preparation outside of the dining hall. However, some fear using a microwave will harm their body because of its radiation use. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), microwave ovens are safe and will not expose users to radiation. However, the plastic microwavable container holding your next lunch leaches chemicals into your food.

Microwaves are a type of electromagnetic radiation, a form of energy that works as magnetic waves that travel in packets of energy. Microwave ovens use a shallow frequency of this radiation, like a lightbulb. This microwave energy is transformed into heat as it is absorbed by food. Although radiation is used, the WHO says that food does not become radioactive. This means you don't need to worry about the side effects of the microwave the next time you heat your Kraft Mac and Cheese.

Humans can be affected by electromagnetic waves, but not at the low frequency of those used in your dorm microwave ovens. If a microwave oven has lock systems that stop the oven when the door opens, the radiation cannot harm students using it. The Center for Devices and Radiological Health, through the Food and Drug Administration, tests microwave ovens to ensure this safety. To further ensure your microwave is working safely, regularly check it to ensure all locks work and there are no gaps in the door.

SO, WHAT IS THE CONCERN?

Plastic is a concern when using a microwave oven. Although many plastic dishware and food containers claim to be microwave-safe, they leach chemicals into food when heated. Microwave-safe simply means the plastic will not melt when microwaved. This label does not take the chemicals that form plastic into consideration. When plastic is heated, its additives can break down and leach into the food. In 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency tested over 400 plastic food containers and found that most leaked chemicals known to disrupt the body. Although convenient, these plastic containers should not be in the microwave because heated plastic can leach chemicals into your food. Instead, students should transfer their food to microwave-safe glass or ceramic dishware before microwaving. To safely use a microwave oven and avoid plastic leaching, cook food in microwave-safe ceramic or glass containers instead of plastic.

HOW TO MAINTAIN SAFETY

The WHO offers several recommendations to individuals using a microwave. In addition to ensuring the door is closed and sealed, users must be sure there are "no visible signs of damage to the seals or the outer casing of the oven," Ensure the door shuts properly, safety interlock devices are working and keep the interior and exterior door seals of the microwave clean. Should the microwave be damaged, don't use it until it is repaired.

By following these tips, students can make an educated decision on how safe they are when using the microwave. Safe microwave usage is important to ensure one's health and well-being.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

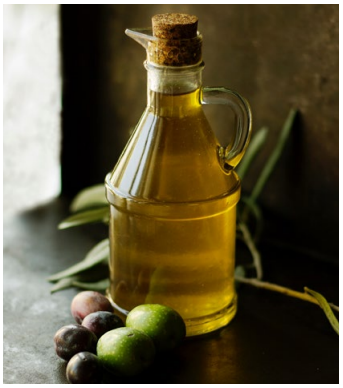
www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-06/documents/ace3_2013.pdf

www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/radiation-microwave-ovens

DEFINING LIPIDS: THE PROS AND CONS OF FATS

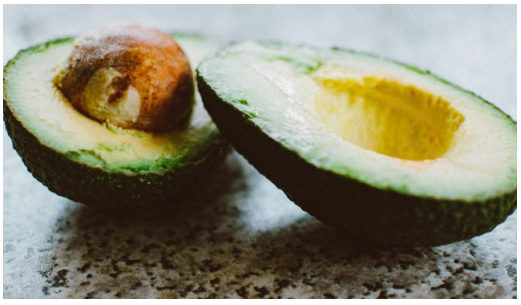
By Molly Santaniello
First-year student, Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

The word *fat*, historically, seems to always be a word to be wary of, something people want to avoid. Especially adolescents and college students are made to feel insecure or ashamed when eating fats. As one of the three macronutrients, fats are essential to the human diet and maintaining healthy internal conditions. The source of fat, however, is what to be cautious of because there are multiple types of lipids, and knowing where to find them in a dining hall or grocery store can make all the difference.



First, lipids, a class of organic compounds, can be broken into two categories: fats and oils. Fats are lipids solid at room temperature, and oils are liquid lipid sources. Both add a velvety mouthfeel to foods and a great deal of flavor. They provide fat-soluble vitamins (vitamins A, D, E and K) and offer more than twice as many calories as carbohydrates and proteins, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Fat insulates the body and pads its organs to protect from injuries, stores energy, acts as a messenger and is essential to building hormones. All functions combined, fats are necessary for human composition, so differentiating between the diverse types of fat is essential to know what sources and how much to consume.

The two types of fats are saturated and unsaturated, and typically, saturated fats are the ones to avoid. Saturated fats have tight bonds in the single fatty acid chain and are usually solid at room temperature. Because of their composition, they are hard to digest and build up in the body. Trans fats, the unhealthiest saturated fat, can lead to clogged arteries by raising LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol), and they lower HDL cholesterol, which is needed to carry excess cholesterol to the liver to be removed. This increases the risk for heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. Foods high in trans fats common on college campuses include highly processed foods, baked goods and fried foods.



Unsaturated fats are double or triple bonds, and thus are not as saturated with hydrogen atoms and are easier to process. They are usually heart-healthy and come in monounsaturated (omega 9) and polyunsaturated (omega 3 and omega 6) fats. Eating foods containing monounsaturated fat can improve blood cholesterol levels and decrease the risk for cardiovascular diseases. Foods high in monounsaturated fat include avocados, peanut butter, almond butter, nuts (almonds, cashews, peanuts, pecans, hazelnuts) and vegetable oils like olive oil. A few of these foods are not as accessible to students on campus, but an easy place to find some heart-healthy nuts is purchasing trail mix on the next Wegmans trip.

Polyunsaturated fats are essential but cannot be produced in the human body. Omega 3 and omega 6 must be obtained from foods that contain these fatty acids. They are needed for cell growth and brain function and are most easily found in plant-based foods, fish and oils; look for salmon, freshwater fish, walnuts, flax seeds, chia seeds, soy (tofu, soy butter, soybeans) and canola oil. Even the Syracuse University dining halls have a range of seafood options and vegan meals that incorporate tofu for a daily dose of omega acids.

While everything can be healthy in moderation, it is important to consider these tips when choosing the proper lipid/fat sources. Being cautious can help prevent fluctuations in cholesterol levels and clogged arteries. Make sure to achieve the proper amount of omega fatty acids. Avoiding highly processed and hydrogenated foods helps eliminate some of these risks, and focusing on whole, organic products ensures the intake of essential nutrients.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.health.com/food/the-22-worst-foods-for-trans-fat

www.verywellhealth.com/which-foods-contain-trans-fats-697735

WHAT CAUSES BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR STOMACH?

HOW TRANS FATS AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

By Molly Santaniello
First-year student, Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Students are always told not to eat fatty foods because the ingredients lead to weight gain, heart disease, heightened cholesterol and other adverse health effects. However, unlike other unhealthy ingredients, trans fats even have the power to affect emotions. In short, foods high in trans fats can cause gut inflammation, eventually suppressing the release of serotonin and dopamine (the happy hormones).

Have you ever had butterflies in your stomach? Well, this expression is not just a metaphor but a natural feeling in the gut caused by anxiety.

All 11 organ systems in the human body are so interconnected that they are catalysts, relying on each other to maintain proper balance. The organ systems are co-dependent on each other for functioning and optimal health; if one is unhealthy, it will affect the other organ systems. Thus, the brain is directly connected to the gastrointestinal tract through the central nervous system and controls certain aspects of digestion. Emotions can affect gut health, and gut health can impact mental illness, thus making healthy diet choices essential to health and well-being.

According to MedlinePlus, artificial trans fats pose substantial health risks because of the hydrogenation when manufactured, and these unhealthy fats are found primarily in baked goods and processed foods. In college dining halls, students are exposed to vast quantities of these foods, and because of the accessibility, the unhealthy foods are tempting.

Fast food, such as fries and burgers, potato chips, margarine, dairy creamers, donuts, cookies and pies, are some foods highest in trans fats, so intake should be limited. These sources of trans fats lower HDL (good) cholesterol, increase LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, clog arteries, heighten the risk of Type 2 diabetes and hamper the production of neurotransmitters. Thus, trans fats are dangerous for human blood, biomes and brains.

Because of the gut-brain axis, scientists have begun studying cognitive and emotional behaviors with gastrointestinal processes. According to Medical News Today, "Scientists believe it may play a role in the relationship between the gut and a person's state of mental health." The gut microbiota is a collection of microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi and viruses that are essential in the digestive system for proper functioning and aid in regulating the immune system. Dysbiosis is the imbalance of microorganisms in a person's microflora, which leads to illness and causes inflammation in the gut. Studies have shown that stress in certain parts of the gastrointestinal tract causes microbiota to release cytokines from inflammatory cells, affecting the nervous system, too.

Gut microbiotas control the regulation of neurotransmitters like serotonin, affecting mood stabilization. This chain reaction leads to inflammation affecting the gut-brain axis and suppressing necessary neurotransmitters, both correlating with elevated levels of mental illnesses. That is, imbalances in the gastrointestinal system send signals to the central nervous system that trigger mood changes. A poor diet can affect levels of serotonin and dopamine.

Most brain-gut effects on mental health can be prevented with intelligent decisions and healthy eating habits. Being conscious of what types of fat, oil, sugar and processed ingredients are in meals is vital to help maintain these ideal conditions in the gut microbiome. Less inflammation in the gut creates less stress and suppression of neurotransmitters. Monitoring food intake from dining halls, snacks and cafes will help prevent this catalyst event, preserving mental and physical health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/4182-fat-and-calories
www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-cholesterol/in-depth/trans-fat/art-20046114#:~:text=Doctors%20worry%20about%20added%20trans,unhealthy%20effect%20on%20cholesterol%20levels.
www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-truth-about-fats-bad-and-good

KNOWING YOUR RISK DURING FLU SEASON: PREVENTING COLDS AND FLU AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

By Julia Anne Favaro
First-year student, Public Health
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

This time of year, classes sound less like lecture presentations and more like a symphony of coughs and sniffles. Illness is everywhere you turn, from the pod bathrooms to basketball games. No part of campus feels safe. Being close to others on a college campus increases a student's risk of getting sick. This is why it's so important to be cautious during cold and flu season.

Lisa Olson-Gugerty, certified nurse practitioner and professor of public health at Syracuse University, explains that students are more likely to contract an illness while living in residence halls because they are living in a building with hundreds of students who all have different exposures and health behaviors. Therefore, not everyone takes the same precautions. You can decrease your risk of illness by getting a flu shot, practicing efficient hand hygiene, disinfecting living and workspaces, getting enough sleep and eating a nourishing, balanced diet.

Hand hygiene is often dismissed as common knowledge. Healthy hand hygiene consists of washing your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. This preventive recommendation has been instilled in every kindergarten classroom, public bathroom and even artsy informational Instagram posts during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, handwashing is often overlooked. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says that consciously washing your hands is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick and prevent the spread of bacteria. The CDC also says that proper hand hygiene can prevent one in five respiratory illnesses, such as a cold or flu. Being mindful of handwashing, especially before eating, and avoiding touching many shared surfaces can help students prevent illness as well.

Viruses like the cold and flu cling onto air and surfaces, like your hands. Viruses can survive on metal, plastic, fabric, paper and glass, says Medical News Today. Touching infected surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth is a common way to introduce viruses into your body. Using disinfectant wipes and sprays around your dorm and workspaces reduces your chances of getting sick. The Mayo Clinic says that the most common objects to disinfect are door handles, keyboards and phones. In a college setting, it is especially important to clean frequently used public spaces such as library surfaces and classroom desks.

Students are exposed to germs every day, whether through a fellow student's cough or touching a doorknob. A healthy immune system fighting these viruses is just as important as preventive measures. According to the CDC, two significant factors that affect your immune system are diet and sleep.

Eating a nutritious and balanced diet aids cell function and optimal immune function. The Harvard School of Public Health says that a balanced meal should include vegetables, whole grains, fruits, protein and healthy oils. Your body also needs adequate sleep, not only for energy but to produce antibodies. The CDC recommends that students 18 and older get at least seven hours per night. In addition to this, receiving the flu vaccine is important in preventing the flu, reducing the flu's severity and slowing its spread, according to the CDC. You can get your flu shot through Syracuse University's Barnes Center at The Arch flu clinics. Students can also make an appointment with the Barnes Center via its patient portal if they suspect they have contracted an illness. By engaging in these preventive practices, you can protect yourself and your classmates against illness during this cold and flu season.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm

experience.syracuse.edu/bewell/primary-health-care/flu-clinics/

Make a Barnes Appointment: experience.syracuse.edu/bewell/about/patient-portal/

WHY PLANTS MAKE THE BEST ROOMMATES:

THE BENEFITS OF GREENERY IN DORM ENVIRONMENTS

By Julia Anne Favaro
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David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Whether you notice plants or not, we are surrounded by greenery, from the grass below our feet to the blossoming orange flowers sprinkled around the Syracuse University campus. Many people enjoy the presence of plants; however, few recognize the health attributes that plants offer to our environment. Evidence suggests plants have several health-benefiting qualities, which is why you may want them in your dorm room. One of the major benefits of plants is to improve air quality.

Air pollution is a common health issue in dorms, due to toxins, including paint, cleaning materials and construction debris. Plants help improve indoor air quality by absorbing a portion of these harmful pollutants. A NASA study found that the air quality in spacecraft improved after plants were introduced.

If you want to reap the air-purifying benefits of plants, a rubber plant improves air quality in dorms by fighting mold and eliminating air toxins. Rubber plants need a moderate amount of sunlight and water once a week to thrive in a dorm. Although plants make a dent in absorbing air pollutants, they do not absorb as much as an air purifier and should not act as a replacement for one.

Having plants in your dorm can help improve your stress levels. A study published by the National Library of Medicine concluded after having participants work with plants or on a computer, participants who worked with plants reported feeling relaxed and had a lowered heart rate and blood pressure. Those working on the computer reported an increased blood pressure.

Plants are an easy way to brighten up the space, especially in a small, stuffy dorm room. Having plants makes dorm rooms far more comfortable by bringing a piece of life into a usually small, dull space. Succulent plants are an effortless way to add some excitement to your dorm room. Succulents come in several shapes, sizes and colors, ranging from bright green spears to pale purple flowering leaves. These vivacious little plants are pleasing to the eye and add an appealing sense of nature to student's dorm rooms. Succulents are easy to care for, requiring little water and moderate light.

Having plants does come with a sense of responsibility, but don't let this prevent you from reaping the benefits of a green companion. Several plants are easy to care for. Plants such as the snake plant are resilient and difficult to kill. They only need to be watered about once every two weeks and once a month in the Syracuse winter. These tall reaching plants with strong leaves of dark and light green stripes are a pleasure to the eye and will uplift the mood of any dorm and student, especially in the dreary winter months. In addition to this, they survive well in both poor and adequate light.

Another easy option is the peperomia plant, which only needs watering every two weeks and can thrive in all levels of sunlight. The peperomia plant is bursting with shiny leaves with different shades of green. An easy way to acquire a plant is through one of Syracuse University's plant sales held in the Campus Store once every fall and spring. Contact the Campus Store for specific times and dates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

time.com/6258638/indoor-plants-health-benefits/

Contact Syracuse University Campus Store: campusstore@syr.edu

HOW TO BREATHE CORRECTLY:

A GUIDE TO MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

By Hannah Cohen-De La Rosa
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How often has it happened to you? You've experienced a stressful episode or been in the middle of an anxiety attack, and the first thing someone says to you is, "Just breathe." But what does that mean? Breathing is the most essential action our bodies do unconsciously, but most individuals don't give it a second thought. Learning and educating ourselves to breathe correctly is a powerful way to manage stress and anxiety.

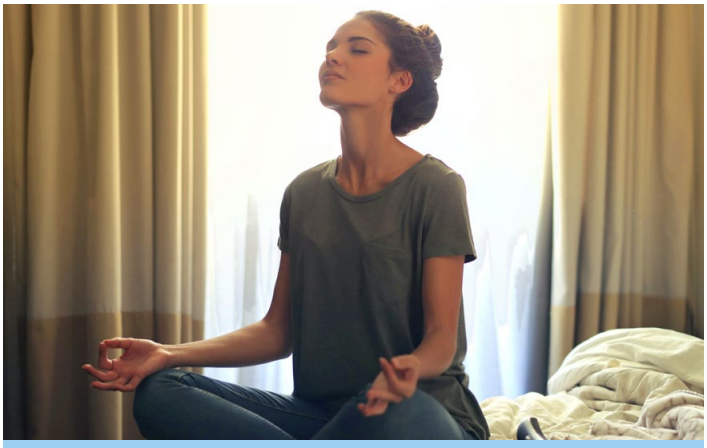
Breathing is not an automatic function; it is a dynamic process that can be harnessed for our benefit. If students look at the science of breathing, it is simply the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide between our lungs and bloodstream. However, how we breathe can impact our body's response to stress and anxiety. When students get anxious before a test or interview, their bodies are likely to start to engage in shallow and rapid breathing, releasing hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. While this fight-or-flight mechanism may be helpful in certain situations, an overload of stress and anxiety daily can lead to further health problems.

The benefits of conscious breathing include stress reduction, increased oxygen and improved focus. Deep breathing engages the parasympathetic nervous system, often called the "rest-and-digest" system. This helps counteract the stress response. Furthermore, it allows the body to receive more oxygen into its cells, boosting energy levels. Lastly, mindful breathing can help an individual stay present and concentrated in the moment.

Most college-age students are unaware of the impact of proper breathing techniques. Without appropriate education, breathing techniques may remain elusive and ineffective. Education on adequate breathing involves understanding breathing mechanics, learning various methods and developing mindfulness. This knowledge empowers individuals to take control of their breath and use it to manage stress and anxiety effectively.

Elizabeth Scott, Ph.D., wrote in the Verywell Mind website, "Mindfulness is the practice of staying fully present in the moment without judgment." Breathing is integral to mindfulness because it anchors individuals to the present moment and presents them with awareness. By consciously observing their breath, students can try to disassociate themselves from thoughts causing unnecessary worrying and focus their attention on the present moment, the here and now. Mindfulness relieves stress and anxiety and is beneficial in the long run. With regular mindfulness practice, students can rewire their brains, increasing emotional resilience and benefit mental health overall.

Charlie Moult, a chiropractor and breathwork facilitator practicing in London and the founder of Source, offers some breathing technique tips. Understanding the significance of conscious breathing and mindfulness offers a powerful means to manage stress and anxiety, emphasizing its potential to enhance overall well-being for college students.



A BREATHING EXERCISE FOR ANXIETY:

- Sitting tall or lying down with knees bent up, place your hands on your belly and focus on deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth, making a shhh sound on the exhale.
- Breathe in for the count of 5 and slowly out for 8. Repeat for three to four minutes, or for as long as needed.
- By lengthening the exhales and focusing on using the diaphragm, we can stimulate the vagus nerve, which calms our nervous system.

A BREATHING EXERCISE FOR FOCUS AND PRODUCTIVITY:

- Sitting comfortably, breathe in and out through the nose, focusing on breathing into the belly.
- (4 times) Inhale for the count of 4 and exhale for the count of 4.
- (4 times) Inhale for the count of 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4.
- (4 times) Inhale for 8, exhale for 8.
- (4 times) Inhale for 8, hold 8, exhale 8, hold 8.
- Relax and come back to a natural rhythm with your breath.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

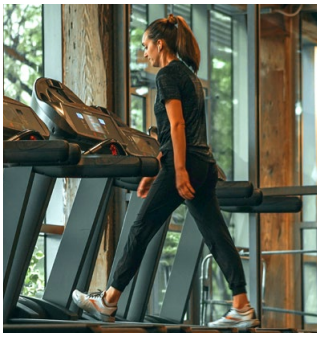
rightasrain.uwmedicine.org/mind/stress/why-deep-breathing-makes-you-feel-so-chill

www.verywellmind.com/mindfulness-the-health-and-stress-relief-benefits-3145189#:~:text=Mindfulness%20is%20the%20practice%20of,of%20your%20body%2C%20etc.)

LOW-IMPACT WORKOUTS AND MOVEMENT: REMAINING FIT ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS

By Ashley Colombo
Sophomore, Art History
College of Arts and Sciences

For many students, the first time they feel motivated to begin working out in a gym setting is when they start their college careers. Exercising can play a vital role in alleviating the many outside stressors that come with life on a college campus. However, the environment of a gym can be overwhelming for a beginner. According to the Global Health and Fitness Association, "50% of Americans are too intimidated to visit the gym." This phenomenon is often called "gym-timidation." College students are not exempt from these feelings.



When stepping into the gym as a beginner, the priority should be enhancing the physical appearance and the outcome of the experience. College students face constant social life, assignments, exams and maintaining their relationships on campus and at home every day. These stressors and many more can be released during exercise to significantly improve a student's mindset. The National Library of Medicine says, "Exercise improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive function." Exercise can also improve academic performance. "Physical activity is an important key factor of academic performance since it improves brain neurotrophic factors, brain development and overall health status," the NLM says.

For Kylie Harmon, assistant professor and certified strength and conditioning specialist at Syracuse University, "The best form of exercise is the one that you enjoy doing consistently. You don't want to feel like you're pulling teeth every time you work out, because you're not going to stick to it." Low-impact workouts, including intense and effective workouts, can be an easy and enjoyable gateway into the exercise world. "We can have low-impact exercises be effective if we bring our highest effort to the workout. We don't need to be jumping, hopping or sprinting everywhere to have an effective workout. It is more about consistent movement," Harmon says.

Low-impact exercises can include walking, Pilates and yoga.

THE IMPACT OF WALKING

Walking is a movement that almost every human engages in daily, especially college students on a large campus. Many students do not consider walking an exercise, rather than just an ordinary human function. Harmon says, "Walking is amazing. It is low-impact and very easy for people who have a good general state of health. It is free, easy and accessible to much of the population." Walking can increase energy levels, improve muscle endurance and prevent disease. "The more you can walk, the better. This can include walking between classes, walking between buildings or offices, and taking the stairs. Little increments of steps add up, and it's a great way to get active, especially during the days you are not able to participate in more organized physical activity."

THE IMPACT OF PILATES

Pilates may be the best choice for a more mind-to-body exercise that can tone and strengthen the entire body. Pilates uses a combination of around 50 simple exercises to simulate muscular exertion and can be used to increase muscle strength and endurance, flexibility, and improve posture and balance. According to Harmon, "From what I know of Pilates, it is very helpful in terms of building strength relative to body weight or body mass. It can help with mobility and flexibility and stretching out the body."

THE IMPACT OF YOGA

Like its low-impact counterparts, yoga offers fitness through its involvement of mindfulness, concentration, strength and flexibility. There are many diverse types of yoga to choose from, and the space in which it is practiced can be personalized for further relaxation. Harmon says, "Similar to Pilates, yoga can build up relative strength, mobility, muscular endurance and help stretch out the body. While some poses or holds do not require a lot of movement, they can still build up muscular endurance the body needs to build muscle mass, hypertrophy and overall functional fitness."

Many options for low-impact exercises are effortless enough to overpower the "gym-timidation" that many beginners in the gym experience. After the knowledge of simple and enjoyable exercises is instilled, going to the gym can become a daily and positive addition to your routine, clearing your mind of outside stressors and leaving you feeling confident in your skin.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.ihrsa.org/improve-your-club/industry-news/fitness-industry-roundup-gym-timidation-is-real/

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3666467/.

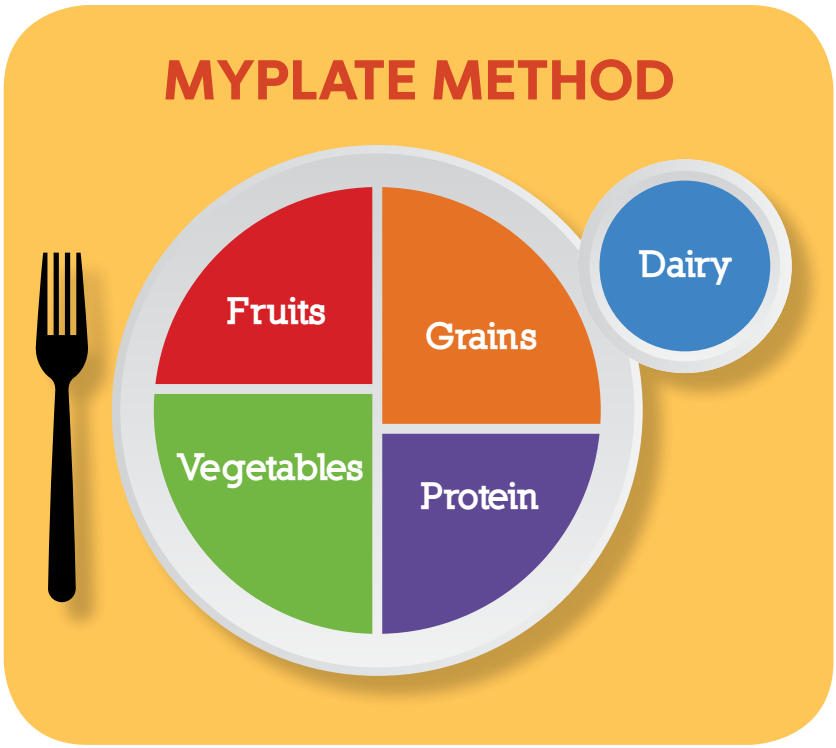
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9690464/#:~:text=Physical%20activity20is%20indicated%20as,development%2C%20and%20overall%20health%20sttus.

OVERCOMING DIET STEREOTYPING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING HABITS

By Ashley Colombo
Sophomore, Art History
College of Arts and Sciences

After a long class, a challenging exam or a night out, students will gravitate toward an on-the-go snack or a meal that brings them comfort, such as a slice of pizza. This habit of disregarding healthier options causes a lack of nutrients in the body, a decrease in health and a toxic relationship with food for many college-age individuals. A study by Northwestern Medicine and Northeastern Illinois University states that 95% of college students don't consume their recommended daily serving of fruits and vegetables.

Nigel Graham, registered dietician and an adjunct instructor at Syracuse University, says, "This is college students' first real chance at freedom; they have the freedom to eat what they want, when they want, however frequently and how much." The food freedom students experience can cause a shift in their relationship with food and overall eating habits. College students are also faced with new challenges, such as mindless eating, endless food options in the dining hall, a lack of parental guidance or small increments of time to fit meals in.



Often, students confuse healthy habits with some form of dieting in fear of the "freshman 15" weight gain. However, healthy dieting can result in unhealthy practices for young people. "Don't feel like just because everyone around you is putting themselves on a calorie restriction diet that you have to as well," says Graham. "Calorie restriction is not necessarily a key component in a healthy diet." Calorie-restriction diets quickly turn into binge eating and weight gain, as your body tries to take in the nutrients it has been restricted from.

To help combat this, "the U.S.D.A. MyPlate model comes in, showing that all foods can fit if consumed in moderation," Graham says. The U.S.D.A. MyPlate displays the five main food groups that should be incorporated into every meal: fruits, grains, vegetables, proteins and dairy. The MyPlate model has different variants to accommodate allergies, cultural differences and special diets.

"When you get the portions of food like the MyPlate method shows, you'll find that your satiety lasts a lot longer, and you will get full quicker," Graham says.

Regarding mealtime, Graham says that a college student should "ideally focus first on having lean meat, then choosing a hearty portion of vegetables, as vegetables and fruit are usually something that people tend to leave out of their diets. Most people will obtain adequate protein if they steer towards lean cuts and adequate grains." Overall, the key to building balanced meals, especially in the dining hall, is to rebuild the understanding of nutrition.

No food can be stigmatized as healthy or unhealthy, because every food can fit into a balanced diet with moderation. When it comes to mealtime, and it feels overwhelming to start building your plate, remember the MyPlate method of incorporating fruits, grains, vegetables, proteins and dairy. All the positive benefits will follow.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2532948/.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6422551/.

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