

# healthy you

mind, body, spirit

FALL 2020 VOL. 20 ISSUE 1



## Staying Connected

How telemedicine counseling has kept providers and patients together during the pandemic

## Wastewater Surveillance at Syracuse University: The Facts

Sitting down with epidemiologists and professors David Larsen and Brittany Kmusch

## Health Hubs at Syracuse University

Exploring health and wellness resources

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*Healthy You* welcomes letters to the editor and story ideas

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The Student Editorial Board is responsible for providing work structure for the magazine's production, which includes the content, design, production and distribution. The information contained in this publication is not to be construed as medical advice. Readers should consult a medical professional before engaging in any activity described. The contents of this magazine may not be reprinted without the expressed consent of the editorial director.

Syracuse University has paused residential learning. These articles were written prior to this decision and reflect an on-campus residential environment.

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By Cate Willing & Kaylee Nieves  
Public Health Students  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING YOUR FLU SHOT



While getting the flu shot is important every year as we enter flu season, coupled with the dangers of COVID-19, getting your flu shot this year is crucial. September and October marked the beginning of flu season, the best time to get a flu shot. The flu varies in severity yearly and impacts people differently. The vaccine is “40 percent to 60 percent effective most years” and if you do happen to catch the flu, post-vaccination, the risk of severe illness is much milder, according to the Harvard Medical School. With many protective public health measures in place because of COVID-19, the transmission of the flu may not be as widespread. But because of coronavirus, hospital availability and access to treatment if infected with the flu will be more challenging than previous years. As students at Syracuse University, we have committed to the “Stay Safe Pledge,” which requires us to get vaccinated against the flu. To uphold your commitment and keep yourself healthy, visit the Barnes Center, where the flu vaccine is available to all members of the University. See the patient portal for scheduling information: [syr.medicatconnect.com/home.aspx](http://syr.medicatconnect.com/home.aspx)

Source: Harvard Medical School

## LONELINESS DURING A PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it a whirlwind of physical and mental health issues. Months of isolation have put many individuals in uncomfortable positions where they are lacking physical touch and social interactions. According to *The New York Times*, the lack of interaction with others can lead to “touch deprivation, which can lead to health issues like anxiety and depressions.” While widespread physical connections and touch may be long on the horizon, there are ways to simulate touch within your body at home. To cope with touch deprivation, researchers encourage activities like yoga, massages and using weighted blankets to simulate those touch responses in the brain.

Source: *The New York Times*



## UPCOMING HOLIDAY SEASON AND COVID-19

As the fall season speeds by, traditionally large family and friend-related holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas are approaching. While these celebrations are generally defined by their crowds of family members traveling from different places and large buffet-style meals, the coronavirus pandemic

may have other styles of celebration in mind. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has many recommendations to lessen the risk of COVID-19 transmission and advises against any high-risk transmission activities. One of main elements in staying safe while celebrating is recognizing the community level spread of COVID-19: “Higher levels of COVID-19 cases and community spread in the gathering location, as well as where the attendees are coming from, increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees,” says the CDC. Implementing preventive measures, if community risk is not too high—like gathering outside, using disposable and individually package dishware, wearing masks and social distancing—is still crucial during the holidays and will help to prevent spreading coronavirus to your family and your community.

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Holiday Guidelines



# PUBLIC HEALTH FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## SITTING DOWN WITH PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSOR **BERNARD APPIAH**

By Cate Willing  
Junior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**B**ernard Appiah, a new assistant professor of public health in the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, embodies what it means to have a passion for education, in every sense of the phrase.

Appiah grew up in a small village in Ghana, a place so small that he says it is indistinguishable on a map. Appiah was the youngest of five children born to his mother and father. His interest in education stems in part from his father, an original communications expert.

In his village, with a population of about 1,000, Appiah's father was known as the "town crier." In this role, also known as the gong-gong beater, Appiah's father was tasked with spreading news and information across the community. He received information regarding issues such as agriculture, health and vaccines and passed on the news to the rural dwellers. The crier used vocal communication to relay the message. This original form of communication, or reporting, interested Appiah and has stuck with him in his pursuits of communications fields, specifically science journalism.

Appiah applied his interest in journalism to his position as the editor of the magazine produced by the Ghana Pharmaceutical Students Association at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana where studied pharmacy.

Although Appiah has studied a variety of technical sciences, his original love for communication always shines through. "Communication just won't leave me alone," he says.

The timeline of Appiah's pursuit of higher education can seem intense. He completed two master's degrees, one in science and technology journalism and another in development communication in the same year, followed three years later by completing a doctorate in public health with a concentration in health promotion and community health sciences. These accomplishments, while numerous, were manageable by Appiah, whose nickname in high school was "Aristotle," after the Greek philosopher.

Appiah says he is "a very big outlier," compared to the traditional trajectory of people in his small village. He was the only one of his family to attend high school and the first in his village to attend

university, let alone to receive two master's degrees and a doctorate of public health.

His passion and love for education marked Appiah's childhood. Accepted into Ghana Secondary Technical School at age 16, he commuted long distances to school every day, as boarding was too expensive. Appiah's personality and expertise in school led his biology master, what the students called their teachers in Appiah's secondary school, to take him on as a mentee. At this time, Appiah

moved from home and lived with his biology master on campus, an experience that Appiah recalls fondly.

Appiah was now fully immersed in his education and surrounded by those with similar interests. The change sparked his intellectual drive. Appiah and his biology master became great companions.

"To this date, he is like a father figure to me," Appiah says. His teacher stood in place of his late father on Appiah's wedding day.

Appiah credits, in part, his success to the support from strangers throughout his life. "Naturally, I am inclined to help," he says, given the help that he was given throughout his education, "and I see public health as more about helping people. It is a perfect fit for me."

Health promotion, Appiah's key interest, creates in his mind the perfect intersection of an art, communication and development, and a science, public health. His background in pharmacy and communication influences much of the health promotion work he does today.

While adjusting to life in Syracuse, Appiah is keeping busy through various research projects. He is working with the National Institutes of Health in a six-year project in Ghana to promote blood donation. For Ghanaians, donating blood is not common because of cultural beliefs. His goal is to engage first-time blood donors. Much of Appiah's researched is centered around using communication methods like docudramas to promote healthy behaviors. Appiah says he's open to students, passionate about health and communication, who want to work with him.

Bernard Appiah is available at [beappiah@syr.edu](mailto:beappiah@syr.edu). For more information regarding his background, visit [falk.syr.edu/people/appiah-bernard/](http://falk.syr.edu/people/appiah-bernard/)



Coming in the Spring 2021 Edition: Faculty Spotlight on professor Miriam Mutambudzi, new public health faculty.

# HOW TO MANAGE STRESS IN COLLEGE

## EXPLORING MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES

By Sydney Hill

First-year student, Public Health

David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**T**hink about what you have learned to do to cope with stress as a college student. Those common feelings of anxiety and being overwhelmed from your coursework can have negative health impacts, but there are ways to manage them. Some people know how to de-stress from what they are going through; others need some guidance. Meditation can be a great way to de-stress, especially for college students.

Meditation can lower mood disturbance, helping alleviate anxiety and stress levels. Mood disturbance and anxiety are common among college students and are often stigmatized. According to a paper in the *Journal of American College Health* by Dorothy C. Ibes, Ph.D., most college students experience overwhelming stress and 63.3 percent of students report overwhelming anxiety. Ibes studied stress in relation to meditation and found meditation reduced stress rates across her focus groups.

Students at Syracuse University can relate to being stressed and having anxiety due to school, especially with online classes. Tory Ash, a graduate student at the University, is studying mindfulness and its relation to student stress levels. She says engaging in mindfulness practices is a way to lower students' stress levels. Meditating can also be a great outlet for students to deal with their feelings and anxiety.

Meditation is oftentimes overcomplicated, but it actually is an accessible practice. To begin meditating, you should find a quiet space where you can sit for a few minutes uninterrupted. Once you are in a comfortable position, start to pay attention to your breath. You can close your eyes if comfortable and focus on the inhale and exhale of your breath. Take a deep inhale and feel your belly expand. Hold the breath and after a few seconds slowly exhale and feel your belly contract. You can repeat this for a few minutes or longer. While meditating, try to only focus on your breath and push your current thoughts and upcoming tasks out of

your mind. After any amount of time you are comfortable with, open your eyes and come back to your conscious mind. Breathing techniques are just one example of meditation that can help you become acclimated to the world of mindfulness.

Students may feel that they are lacking the interpersonal connections that characterize college life because of online classes and social distancing. This lack of social outings may also make students feel isolated and alone, leading to more anxiety and stress. Meditation could be a useful outlet for students feeling these pressures of college. There are many ways in which college students can begin practicing meditation or mindfulness.

Ibes studied students' stress levels when students meditated outside, inside and not at all. This study of meditation practice revealed that simply meditating outside can lower stress levels of students. At Syracuse, the many opportunities to engage in mindfulness and meditation include going to the Quad and relaxing or visiting the Crowley Family Mind Spa in the Barnes Center at The Arch. If you don't want to leave your dorm room, there are other options for meditation.

The benefits of meditation can be accessed at the touch of our fingers through a variety of mindfulness and meditation apps. Recent research by Jennifer Huberty, Ph.D., at Arizona State University studied the effect of mobile meditation apps on stress levels. The study showed positive correlation between using the meditation apps and lowering stress and anxiety levels. In a time when most of students' lives are online, this could be a useful tool in coping with stress. The study analyzed the app Calm, which successfully reduced stress and anxiety in the students. Ash calls meditation a skill, "something you develop overtime in order to benefit your well-being."

Meditation may not be for everyone. But if you are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety, it may be worth a try.

Meditation and mindfulness can help you.



### For more information:

[mhealth.jmir.org/2019/6/e14273/](http://mhealth.jmir.org/2019/6/e14273/)

[www.tandfonline.com/doi/epub/10.1080/07448481.2020.1726926?needAccess=true](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epub/10.1080/07448481.2020.1726926?needAccess=true)

# NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE: PLANNING IS KEY!

## THE VALUE OF PLANNING AND TIME MANAGEMENT

By Riley Lucas  
First-year student, Undecided  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**E**very college student knows the feeling of being overwhelmed, drowning in schoolwork. It is not fun, and happens to everyone, but there are many ways to ensure you stay organized to minimize these feelings.

To stay on top of everything, it is important to keep track of deadlines, manage your time wisely and create a schedule for yourself. Staying organized and having a plan for time management, deadlines and schedules are crucial to a successful college experience. These responsibilities can easily slip away when living on your own for the first time.

The first critical step in staying on top of your work in college is to have a planner with all deadlines and assignments written up well in advance.

“My Homework app is a great app if you are someone that is digital. It will give you alerts to when things are almost due depending on your needs,” says Elaina Fenstermacher, a coach for students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and learning disabilities at Syracuse University. Apps such as My Homework and Calendars: Planners & Reminders are one way to keep track of your schedule and deadlines. When everything is in one place, in a planner or a planning app, it relieves the stress of potentially forgetting a deadline for a class.

Good time management skills are a necessity. Don't save all your work until the night before it is due. If the work is spread throughout the week, it will lead to a stress-free Sunday night. According to Fenstermacher, “A lot of my students use this, and I will tell you, it changes students' lives, planning out hour by hour your day.”

Creating a schedule and routine for your day will encourage you to get everything done and ensures you will still have free time to hang out with friends or watch a show. It is also important to make time for each specific subject. “When it comes to time management and study strategies, chunk it out,” Fenstermacher says. “Don't cram. Break it down and take a two-hour break.”

Try to stray away from procrastinating because there is no perfect time to complete an assignment. Fenstermacher says the most important thing for college students to do is be realistic. Being intentional with the time that you spend on assignments is crucial for avoiding procrastination. So often we set lofty goals and think these outcomes are just naturally going to come.

In addition to counseling at the Center for Disability Resources, the Barnes Center at The Arch offers counseling and workshops to help with topics such as time management.

### For more information:

[disabilityresources.syr.edu/](http://disabilityresources.syr.edu/)

[opportunity.org/learn/lists/10-habits-of-successful-students?gclid=CjwKC\\_Ajw2dD7BRASEiwAWCtCbywrTc7AYLjNj68aL2JAVDCvwhHYxRgxrvqB4EQhZyHVS13INK2YMxoC\\_EIQAvD\\_BwE#.X3VKQpNKg0p](http://opportunity.org/learn/lists/10-habits-of-successful-students?gclid=CjwKC_Ajw2dD7BRASEiwAWCtCbywrTc7AYLjNj68aL2JAVDCvwhHYxRgxrvqB4EQhZyHVS13INK2YMxoC_EIQAvD_BwE#.X3VKQpNKg0p)

[saraloughed.com/45-tips-for-staying-organized-in-college/](http://saraloughed.com/45-tips-for-staying-organized-in-college/)

# SOCIAL DISTANCING VS. SOCIAL ISOLATION

## HOW TO COMBAT ISOLATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

By Anjali Sharma

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

**C** OVID-19 has made this academic year look different from past years. Sure, it may be easier to attend class from your bed, but the impact upon our social lives is a cause for concern. Social distancing is a public health term often used during this pandemic that refers to maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and remain safe. People should adhere to social distancing guidelines, while working on maintaining social connections in other ways.

It is essential to follow social distancing health guidelines, as they are one of the most effective health practices to prevent the spread of the virus, but we have to be aware that we need human interaction to stay mentally fit. Isolation can lead to depression and anxiety, and it can also affect learning abilities.

Being isolated can have an effect on sleep-wake cycles, which can harm one's cognitive processes. Before this isolation period, most students had a regular schedule of waking up early and attending classes in person. Because of COVID-19, students attend classes remotely or asynchronously. This gives the student the option to watch a recorded lecture on their own time, allowing them to sleep in or take the class from their bed. Dr. Sanjay Sharma, a psychiatrist at Emory University, says, "Being isolated can affect your sleep wake cycle, which in turn can affect your overall energy level and mental acuity." Not getting enough sleep can lead to problems focusing and concentrating.

A lack of social activities in isolation can have health-related complications as well. Students may feel uncomfortable to exercise or go to the gym because of the



A mindful "rock balance" activity on the front steps of Hendricks Chapel

fear of becoming ill. This sedentary lifestyle can lead to weight gain, muscle loss and hypertension. As a college student, staying active is important especially if pre-existing health conditions are present. A decrease in exercise "can certainly affect your weight or other health conditions like blood pressure or diabetes," says Sharma.

Isolation can also affect those with pre-existing mental health conditions. These can worsen, or new conditions can develop. If someone has an underlying condition such as depression or anxiety, "isolation and being shut in can exacerbate and make these conditions worse," says Sharma. Although a student may not be clinically diagnosed with depression or anxiety, isolation and disruption of one's social life can lead to the development of these conditions.

Social interactions can help with some of these issues; therefore, students should engage in modified social activities. Syracuse University provides many

activities that students can participate in while still following social distance guidelines. The University has done a great job of encouraging students to participate in a variety of programs and activities; over 300 clubs and organizations are available to students, as the University provides guidance regarding attendance during the pandemic.

Every student is bound to find at least one club or activity that holds their interest. Not only do these clubs and group activities help students develop connections with other students and faculty on campus, but they can also provide an outlet for students to communicate with peers if they are experiencing various mental health issues. Participating in these fun activities is an easy way to meet others around campus in a safe, socially distanced environment.

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### For more information:

[calendar.syracuse.edu/events/](https://calendar.syracuse.edu/events/)

[studentactivities.syr.edu/orange-after-dark/index.html](https://studentactivities.syr.edu/orange-after-dark/index.html)



# STRESS RELIEF THROUGH YOGA

## EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF YOGA

By Siya Kumar

First-year student, Public Health

David B. Falk College of Sports and Human Dynamics

Feeling stressed or anxious about school or life in general? Yoga might be the solution for you. In recent years, yoga has become an increasingly popular form of exercise around the world.

The traditional practice of yoga originated in India over 5,000 years ago, created to unite the mind and body through spiritual development and to practice self-reflection and awareness. In the modern day, many people use yoga to enhance their physical health and flexibility and for its stress-relieving properties. Apart from its physical benefits, yoga can have profound effects on an individual's mental health as well.

According to a study in the publication *Mindfulness*, participants in an eight-week mindfulness-based stress reduction program, including practices of yoga and meditation, were found to have reductions in trait anxiety. Research has also been done on the positive effects of yoga on post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, attention deficit disorders and autism.

Cambre Codington '21 says how useful yoga is for managing her stress and anxiety in college.

"I never really noticed how bad my anxiety was until yoga forced me to slow down and relax," Codington says. "I'm the type of person who is constantly on the go and involved in a million different things that I rarely give myself a mental break, but yoga allows me to be present and stop thinking about everything else going on."

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America reports that anxiety (41.6 percent) and depression (36.4 percent) are the topmost concerns among college students. Yoga is an easy and practical way to relieve symptoms of anxiety and depression as a college student, especially when feeling caught up and overloaded with assignments and activities.

There are many different types of yoga, some physically intensive while others focus on breathing or meditation. Hatha yoga is more physically intensive and most popular in the United States. Iyengar yoga includes flows and incorporates props. Restorative yoga focuses on relaxation without much physical activity. You can try multiple forms of yoga and find one that works best for you. Yogic breathing has been shown to be effective in decreasing anxiety. A study published by the *International Journal of Yoga* found that yogic breathing in patients with generalized anxiety disorder caused a significant decrease in symptom severity by the end of the experiment.

Yoga is a great option for college students because it can be practiced from your dorm room, free of cost. You can find many yoga resources online, like free guided yoga practice on YouTube or monthly subscription programs like Glo and obé. On campus, the Barnes Center at The Arch and student organizations like CHAARG offer yoga sessions virtually and in person. One-credit yoga and meditation classes also are available for students.

If you're feeling stressed or anxious while completing an assignment or before attending a class, set down a mat and practice a few yoga flows and postures for some relief and a healthier mind and body overall.

### For more information:

[www.yogabasics.com/learn/history-of-yoga/#:~:text=The%20beginnings%20of%20Yoga%20were,by%20Brahmans%2C%20the%20Vedic%20priests.](http://www.yogabasics.com/learn/history-of-yoga/#:~:text=The%20beginnings%20of%20Yoga%20were,by%20Brahmans%2C%20the%20Vedic%20priests.)

[adaa.org/finding-help/helping-others/college-students/facts](http://adaa.org/finding-help/helping-others/college-students/facts)

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6329222/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6329222/)



# SELF-CARE: ME TIME!



# THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLOCATING TIME FOR SELF-CARE

By Siya Kumar  
 First-year student, Public Health  
 David B. Falk College of Sports and Human Dynamics

Nowadays, it's difficult to scroll through social media or the internet without finding some post or article about self-care. But as frequently as self-care is mentioned, we often sacrifice our health and well-being to tend to our busy lives and responsibilities. Especially amid a global pandemic, physical and emotional stress levels can run rampant.

Dessa Bergen-Cico, a professor of public health at Syracuse University, specializes in mindfulness-based and complementary health practices, such as the effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction practices on an individual's health. She wants you to practice self-care.

"In my direct experience for 25 years of working with college students, it can be difficult to fit time in [for self-care] and they can sometimes think that they're doing things that are a form of self-care that really aren't," she says.

Prioritizing self-care and incorporating it into our schedules may seem like a luxury, or even selfish and unproductive, but maintaining a healthy body and mind will only make you more efficient and better rested in the long run. According to one of Bergen-Cico's studies published in the *Journal of American College Health*, a group of undergraduate students who participated in a mindfulness-based stress reduction program, including practices of yoga and meditation, were found to experience significant increases in psychological health.

Self-care days are a new trend in which individuals deliberately take time to tend to their mental, physical and emotional needs. While for some people this could mean going to the spa or a shopping trip, self-care definitely doesn't need to be expensive or complicated. A self-care

day can include activities as easy as getting a good night of sleep and eating nutritious food. Those may sound basic, but can easily become less of a priority in our daily lives.

As college students on a budget with never-ending assignments, we can find practices that can be done straight out of a dorm room. Some examples include drinking tea, caring for your skin, reading a book, doing yoga and even coloring. For some people, doing absolutely nothing might be the right thing to do when life gets exhausting. Try to unplug from your device and avoid responding to unnecessary correspondence.

A self-care day should be about taking time out to focus on yourself. Self-care can look different from person to person, depending on their individual likes, interests and needs. Ultimately, you need to familiarize yourself with your own body and the ways by which you can best manage stress and other negative emotions like anxiety.

Apart from tasks and activities, practicing self-love and being kind to yourself are crucial components of self-care. This could mean including positive affirmations about your body, mind and personality as a part of your daily routine, ditching social media or surrounding yourself with positive friends and family. If you're usually hard on yourself in terms of diet and exercise, use the day to relax and place no restrictions on yourself.

How often to have a self-care day is up to the individual. Incorporating some self-care into your daily routine is equally as helpful. Be kind to your own mind, body and spirit, so you can be kinder to others and ready to take on the many responsibilities that life has to offer. Healthier, happier people are the key to creating a better world for all.

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#### For more information:

[www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07448481.2013.813853](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07448481.2013.813853) [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/201812/self-care-12-ways-take-better-care-yourself](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/201812/self-care-12-ways-take-better-care-yourself)

# STAYING CONNECTED

## HOW TELEMEDICINE COUNSELING HAS KEPT PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS TOGETHER DURING THE PANDEMIC



By Kinley Gaudette  
Sophomore, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

COVID-19 has altered lives around the world in unimaginable ways. Many of us never anticipated a world where we could not be face-to-face with our friends, our classmates or even some of our families. For people with mental health conditions, social distancing and public health regulations have taken a large toll. For many dealing with mental health issues, meeting with counselors and therapists was a routine part of life. Now, it is no longer safe to meet with mental health professionals in their office.

Luckily, we live in the age of technology, and most practitioners have been able to substitute traditional appointments with video chat meetings in an emerging field of medicine called telemedicine. This method of patient care has allowed patients to stay connected with their counselors. Versus a traditional appointment, telemedicine is generally more accessible, as it eliminates the time commitment and financial strain associated with transportation. Patients can connect in the comfort of their own homes or, in some cases, their dorm rooms.

Vanessa Jackson, Ed.D., teaches classes on mindfulness and meditation to schoolchildren and adults alike. The transition to online meeting has changed her perspective completely, leading her to consider online platforms even in a post-COVID world. “I am re-evaluating my need for a physical space to conduct my mindful meditation and movement sessions,” she told Katharine Carter of the American Psychological Association. “My goal is to reach and teach as many people as possible, and technology will allow me the freedom to tap into a broader audience of people.”

Psychotherapist Chris Donaghue, Ph.D., emphasizes the importance of care and connection during these trying times. “The

COVID-19 pandemic has taught me the importance of connection for mental health and preventing trauma,” he told Carter. “I’m witnessing how relationships of all kinds are what drive and define biological and psychological health, and I’m seeing how connection can heal us and how its absence and distance can wound us.”

Syracuse University students can connect via telemedicine with both counselors and psychiatrists. Through apps such as Zoom, patients can still hear their counselor or doctor, as well as see them and read their body language, which is essential to quality mental health care. To schedule an appointment, students are encouraged to call the Barnes Center at The Arch through its primary number: 315.443.8000.

For evaluations and talk therapy, students will be scheduled to meet with a member of the counseling staff. For medication management, they will be scheduled to meet with psychiatry staff. Traditionally, referrals to psychiatry are preceded by a few conversations with a counselor. Once students schedule an appointment over the phone, they can see the appointment listed in their Patient Portal under “Appointments.” Under the “Messages” section of the portal, they can see the Zoom link to connect them with their provider. All necessary paperwork and forms will also be accessible online via the Patient Portal, well in advance of any scheduled appointment.

While telemedicine is new to most providers and patients alike, it is a great resource for anyone who wants to either start mental health services or continue with services they started before the pandemic. As an Orange community, it is important that we utilize these resources during this trying time.

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### For more information:

[www.apa.org/members/content/telemental-health-experiences](http://www.apa.org/members/content/telemental-health-experiences)

[ese.syr.edu/bewell/counseling/](http://ese.syr.edu/bewell/counseling/)

[ese.syr.edu/bewell/psychiatry/](http://ese.syr.edu/bewell/psychiatry/)

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# COPING WITH DECISION FATIGUE

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR TODAY? SHOULD I WORK OUT AFTER CLASS? WHAT DO I WANT TO EAT FOR LUNCH?

By Janet Pease  
Former Head of Collections and Research Services  
Syracuse University Libraries

**Y**ou probably make a lot more decisions every day than you realize. Research suggests that the average adult makes 35,000 decisions every day. That's a lot of decisions, and with the increasing number of options available, even choices that seem simple may overwhelm you. It's no wonder that by the end of the day all you might want to do is order a pizza and watch Netflix. This mental drain is a modern phenomenon known as decision fatigue.

## WHAT IS DECISION FATIGUE?

John Tierney, co-author of *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*, wrote that “no matter how rational and high-minded you try to be, you can't make decision after decision without paying a biological price. It's different from ordinary physical fatigue, but you are low on mental energy.”

We are conditioned to think that more choice is a good thing, and it can be—but only up to a certain point. Numerous research studies have shown that when subjects are given too many options they begin to experience “analysis paralysis.” It gets harder to make a choice, and even when people do make a choice, they often second-guess themselves.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

First, make important decisions early in the day when your mind is clear and you are not worn down and frustrated from the day's activities.

Experts recommend practicing mindfulness. This helps to clear mental clutter and relieve stress so that you can focus on important decisions. According to a study published

in *Psychological Science*, 15 minutes of daily focused-breathing meditation can help people reclaim cognitive energy to make smart choices.

Make mundane daily decisions the night before and stick to a routine. Figure out what you are going to wear the following day and set your clothes out. If you want to go to the gym, get your gym bag ready so you only need to grab it on your way out in the morning. Plus, if you have it with you, you are more likely to go to the gym. You can also try a minimalist approach, especially when it comes to clothes. Put a self-imposed limit on your options. For example, do not spend valuable time and brainpower deciding among 20 items on a menu. Narrow your options to three and choose among those. More than that takes valuable mental energy that could be applied to more important things. It helps to aim for getting things done rather than being perfect. For mundane decisions, it doesn't make sense to spend time in analysis paralysis while you weight different options that won't make much difference.

Finally, start small. Find out what kinds of decisions drain your mental energy. Once you do that, you can begin to make incremental changes that will produce huge results in combatting decision fatigue.

## COMBATTING DECISION FATIGUE

- Make big decisions in the morning
- Practice mindfulness
- Make mundane decisions the night before
- Stick to a routine
- Go minimalist
- Limit your options
- Done is better than perfect
- Start with small changes

### For more information:

Baumeister, R., & Tierney, J. (2011). *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*. New York, New York: Penguin Press

Schwartz, B. (2004). *The Paradox of Choice*. New York, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.

TED Talk by Barry Schwartz: *The Paradox of Choice*: YouTube



# HEALTH HUBS AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

## EXPLORING HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

By Carrie Goldberg  
Senior, Public Health

David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**E**ver curious or unsure whom to ask when it comes to health and wellness information on campus? With a quick stop at one of Syracuse University's student-run Health Hubs, you're able to find out all you need to know—from alcohol safety and safe sex and relationships to mental health and COVID-19 safety on campus.

### THE WHO:

Within peer education, there are three specific teams: BeWise, PEERS and SAHMES. All of them include students who run Health Hubs; each team has a different focus within health and wellness. Be Wise is all about alcohol and drug safety, Peer Educators Encouraging Healthy Relationships and Sexuality (PEERS) focuses on safe sex and relationships, and Students Advocating for Mental Health Empowerment (SAHMES) emphasizes the importance of mental health.

### THE WHAT:

**So, what are Health Hubs anyway?** Health Hubs are student-run pop-ups around campus to inform and educate students about health and wellness resources. Each Health Hub focuses on a new topic, from staying safe on campus with COVID-19 to the Barnes Center at The Arch meditation room and pet therapy. These Health Hubs provide important information in an efficient way, and it is proven that peer education is a more effective way of spreading knowledge. A recent UNC Healthy Heels article, "The Power of Peers: Health Benefits of Peer Education," explains that "peer education programs have been shown to be more effective than adult-led education programs in terms

of changing behaviors, attitudes and norms." With an emphasis on peer-led education, Health Hubs are the perfect way to gain valuable knowledge throughout one's college career. Tayah Mccollum '21, a team leader of the Be Wise team, says, "Peer education is an essential part of any college campus community," as it allows "for a better flow of information because you are hearing it from one of your peers."

### THE WHERE:

Health Hubs can be found all around campus, including on the Quad, by Sadler and Lawrinson or in Bird Library along with occasional online Health Hubs.

**What makes Health Hubs so great?** They are quick and easy hot spots filled with important information. A stop at a Health Hub takes no longer than five minutes, making it the perfect break between classes or pit stop on the way back to your dorm. Once a student attends 10 Health Hubs, they receive a free water bottle. Even if they do not visit 10 times, with every visit there's always a prize. To find out more about when and where Health Hubs will be on campus, visit @bewellSU on Instagram or the peer education section of the Barnes Center website ([ese.syr.edu/bewell/](http://ese.syr.edu/bewell/)).

Now that you know who runs Health Hubs, what they are and where to find them, do not forget to stay updated on the Be Well Instagram to find out when and where the next one is to receive a free prize and to stay updated on health and wellness at Syracuse University. As Mccollum says, her "biggest takeaway from running Health Hubs is how important it is for college students to be educated on a wide variety of health and wellness topics."

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### For more information:

[healthyheels.org/2012/10/26/the-power-of-peers-health-benefits-of-peer-education/](http://healthyheels.org/2012/10/26/the-power-of-peers-health-benefits-of-peer-education/)



Please note, this image was taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and does not reflect current public health guidelines.

# MAINTAINING A HEALTHY ROUTINE DURING COVID-19

## WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE AT HOME

By Carrie Goldberg  
Senior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**W**ith gyms at limited capacity, finding ways to stay active during COVID-19 can be a challenge. Making use of resources at home can be just as beneficial. Even with limited capacity, the Barnes Center at The Arch is requiring students to make appointments, and sometimes the urge to work out and stay fit is unplanned. Knowing how to stay active and motivated without the use of a gym is key. Here are some tips:

### STEP 1: UTILIZE YOUR RESOURCES

Do not succumb to the pressure of purchasing expensive workout equipment when you can use what you already have. While a yoga mat or weights may be beneficial or seem necessary, using a towel as a yoga mat and gallons of water as weights gets the job done. Several walking trails around the Syracuse campus can be utilized during the fall and spring months to get those steps in. Jordanna Drazin '20 started her workout brand, The Daily Schvitz, with "a subscription-based workout video library, on-demand classes, a blog and Instagram." See [instagram.com/thedailyschvitz/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/thedailyschvitz/?hl=en)

### STEP 2: STAY FOCUSED

So many online resources can help make working out from home easier. Once you decide exactly the kind of workout you are looking for, it will relieve the pressure of doing it from home. Whether you are interested in Pilates or yoga to running and HIIT, there are so many people and videos to help along that process. Here are a few popular places to start:

- Blogilates (YouTube) free
- MelissaWoodHealth (Instagram) free and subscriptions available
- Nike Run Club (application) free
- The Daily Schvitz (Instagram) free and subscriptions available

As Drazin says, "Just go for it. Just start. Working out isn't about being perfect. It's about finding your strength, challenging yourself, doing something amazing for both your physical and mental health."

### STEP 3: KNOW THE BENEFITS

Not only will you feel good on the inside and out, you will also gain additional benefits from working out from home. Students will save a significant amount of money by not paying for a gym membership or buying expensive equipment. It is also more efficient, as you do not need to walk anywhere to start a workout and you can choose a short video to follow. There is also less pressure knowing no one is watching as you work out. Drazin says that "through working out at home, I have learned to really listen to my body more... Whenever I'm not in the mood to work out, I think about how much more amazing I will feel once it's over. I know I'll feel accomplished."

### YOU CAN DO IT:

Understanding that you are capable of staying fit regardless of COVID-19 and the impact it has made on gyms' availability and capacity is extremely important. Staying active, especially in your room, is a great way to stay mentally and physically healthy while away from home at college.

#### For more information:

[www.cosmopolitan.com/health-fitness/a31927905/free-workout](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/health-fitness/a31927905/free-workout)





# WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY: THE FACTS

## SITTING DOWN WITH EPIDEMIOLOGISTS AND PROFESSORS DAVID LARSEN AND BRITTANY KMUSH

By Sydney Hill

First-year student, Public Health

David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Usually we don't think about what happens after we flush the toilet, but researchers and epidemiologists across the country have taken a new interest in our wastewater. While you may be thinking that's an odd hobby, wastewater surveillance may be the most effective measure to track and prevent COVID-19 cases, due to its ability to detect cases before symptoms show and to predict waves of cases. It's also a cheap process.

When someone has COVID-19, their feces will contain RNA from the virus that slowly decays. As the virus passes through the body, the RNA sheds from the cells and exits the body through the feces. The presence of the RNA in the wastewater allows epidemiologists, such as David Larsen and Brittany Kmush, professors of public health and researchers at Syracuse University, to track where there is COVID-19 RNA and test that localized group of people.

"Deaths are delayed by the chain of transmission," says Kmush. "The benefit of wastewater is that we can test it on a regular schedule and hopefully find cases and transmission closer to the time of actual transmission."

Wastewater surveillance can be advantageous because of its early accessibility. When tracing cases using hospitalizations, the numbers are typically delayed and do not present an accurate depiction of transmission. Wastewater allows for early detection of cases and may lead to prevention of an outbreak.

Recently, the Syracuse University campus saw the real-time benefits of wastewater surveillance. "We saw positive levels of RNA in Ernie Davis as well as Sadler. We instituted a 24-hour quarantine in Ernie Davis while we tested everybody," says Larsen about the early September quarantine for one residence hall. After the testing, Larsen said there were no positive cases and staff was unsure what led to the positive sample of wastewater. The positive cases could have been due to people recovering from COVID-19 who were still shedding RNA or from a person who deposited waste in the dining hall.

Even though they did not find any cases, the quick reaction of the administration and students is a prime example of how everyone at Syracuse is working hard to remain on campus. The incident also demonstrated how quickly students can be isolated and tested after wastewater is flagged as positive.

Wastewater surveillance is not only useful on a college campus setting. These protocols can be used in surrounding communities to test the populations and to track transmission. Tracking COVID-19 in local communities allows for underprivileged populations to maintain surveillance of COVID-19, especially in places where diagnostic testing is not readily available. Diagnostic testing can be expensive, especially for people without insurance or who lost their jobs due to the pandemic. Asked if wastewater surveillance is more or less cost-effective than mass testing, Kmush said testing wastewater tests the entire population, essentially, which could be more cost-effective in the long run.

Christian G. Daughton, a researcher at the Environmental Protection Agency, wrote an article on the evolution of wastewater and its applications during the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that using a wide variety of biomarkers in wastewater surveillance is more cost-effective than mass testing because a large population can be screened with one test. He also said wastewater surveillance is better for mass testing than diagnostic testing. Using wastewater surveillance to track

community transmission also allows community leaders to see what parts of their communities are being impacted.

"Wastewater surveillance is useful because it can guide social distancing, school openings and social gatherings," says Larsen.

The wastewater surveillance program allows communities to determine when they can reopen operations and allows Syracuse University to keep students, faculty and staff safe. The University is using wastewater surveillance to track transmission and prevent an outbreak from going unnoticed. This method should reassure students that the University is trying to keep campus open and prevent COVID-19 transmission. Wastewater surveillance is an invaluable tool in public health and coronavirus tracking. With the addition of wastewater surveillance and the efforts of the student body, Syracuse University is on track to staying on campus for the semester.

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### For more information:

[www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S004896972033151X?via%3Dihub](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S004896972033151X?via%3Dihub)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/wastewater-surveillance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/wastewater-surveillance.html)

[www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/status-of-environmental-surveillance-for-sars-cov-2-virus](https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/status-of-environmental-surveillance-for-sars-cov-2-virus)



# INTUITIVE EATING: BREAKING DOWN DIET CULTURE

## LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO YOUR BODY

By Brooke Kirchner

Sophomore, Public Health

David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**W**orried about the “freshman 15?” What you should be worried about are the staggering statistics highlighting the spectrum of disordered eating among college students. According to the National Eating Disorder Association, 35 percent of college students who experiment with dieting will resort to pathological dieting. This dieting is an unhealthy restriction of food or calories that can lead to a diagnosable eating disorder from a physician. Students who worry about their weight or diet should learn about what intuitive eating is and how it can free them from the dangerous cycle of dieting.

Intuitive eating involves listening and responding to your body’s natural hunger cues by fueling your body with foods that you enjoy. Essentially, when you eat intuitively, you are focusing on how you feel when you eat rather than what calories make up the food you are eating. This awareness includes noticing how it feels when you are hungry or when you are full and responding appropriately. It is centered around connecting to your body rather than restricting it from certain foods that you or others deem unhealthy. Eating intuitively gives you unconditional permission to eat pizza, cookies, ice cream or anything else you may have decided is off-limits. Often times restricting these foods or using them as rewards can lead to overeating when you do allow yourself to eat them.

Claire Chewning, a registered dietician, specializes in intuitive eating and looking at nutrition from a health at every size lens. She owns Yours Chewly Nutrition, where she provides nutrition therapy to individuals, based on the work of registered dietitians Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch, the creators of the intuitive eating principles. Intuitive eating has grown drastically in the past 10 years, with over 150 research articles published on it.

Chewning explains that “if diet culture didn’t exist, intuitive eating would simply be called eating.” Chewning explains that intuitive eating looks at eating through a wider lens than fad dieting, as it is long-term and sustainable. The focus of intuitive eating is not outward appearance and weight but rather being healthy, both mentally and physically, listening to your body and its hunger cues.

College students can be so busy throughout their day, moving from class to class, that they may ignore their hunger cues. It is important to eat throughout the day when you feel hungry and to make time to do so, even if you’re busy. You may even be so busy you forget to eat. Make having meals and snacks throughout the day a priority. This will keep you focused and sustained.



The benefits of intuitive eating are numerous; Chewning listed a few. Instead of focusing on your diet, you are freeing up time to make meaningful connections and engage in life. It creates less chaos in your life, as you remove “the-diet-starts-Monday” mentality. It increases your self-esteem and compassion for yourself, as you are not constantly criticizing yourself for your body and your food choices. Ditch chronic dieting and choose health through honoring your hunger and cravings with intuitive eating.

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### For more information:

[www.intuitiveeating.org](http://www.intuitiveeating.org)

[clairechewning.com](http://clairechewning.com)

[www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/CollegiateSurveyProject](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/CollegiateSurveyProject)

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# PROLONGED COMPUTER USE

## DANGERS, AND SOLUTIONS THROUGH STRETCHING

By Nicole Pulido

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David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**W**ith many activities and classes now online, students find themselves hunched over their computers for long periods of time. Because this shift to prolonged sitting and increased screen time is recent, we may not realize how detrimental this can be to our health.

Prolonged sitting can bring about a variety of aches, from tense shoulders to back pain. These daily aches are easy to dismiss, but taking control of them now will help prevent long-term damage. Implementing a routine of easy, quick stretches is one way to address these pains.

Contrary to popular opinion, stretching should be carried out more often than just before or after exercise. Stretching can also increase one's flexibility, mobility of joints and overall physical and mental health. So, which stretches will help target pain directly correlated to prolonged sitting? Dr. Charles Aranda, a Philippine board-certified orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine physician, along with Jinkle Joy Arandia, a sports physiotherapist from the Philippines, recommend the following stretches.

### NECK PAIN

“Sit or stand upright with your spine straight, shoulders relaxed, and neck centered in a neutral position. Tuck in your chin, and gently pull your head down with one hand to stretch the back of your neck. Hold the stretch for 15 to 20 seconds.”

### TENSE SHOULDERS AND UPPER BACK

“Start by standing or sitting comfortably on the floor or in a chair. Now, place your right hand on the top of your head and gently pull it to your right. Keep the back straight and shoulders relaxed. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, and then slowly lift your head back to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. Pro tip: Stabilize your body by holding onto a chair using one hand while your other hand is doing the exercise.”

### TIGHT LOWER BACK

1. “Lie flat on either the ground or a mat with the legs fully stretched out. Hold each end of a rolled-up towel and wrap it behind the foot. Then pull the leg up in front of the body to feel a slight stretch in the hamstring muscle. Hold this position for 20 seconds, and then lower the leg down slowly.”

2. “For another stretch to help you restore your lower back, lie on your back and hug one knee into your chest. Straighten your other leg along the ground. Pull your knee toward your chest as tight as you can for 20 seconds. Repeat on the other leg.”

While incorporating stretches into your life is important, it is equally vital to set some time aside to take a walk or do any activity that allows your body to take a break from sitting. The Barnes Center at The Arch hosts numerous events weekly, like hikes and ice skating; take advantage of these activities to get outside and be active. But if you find yourself short on time or unable to get out of your dorm for these activities, there are simpler ways to ensure you get some sort of physical activity. For instance, next time you're on your way to class, opt for taking the stairs instead of going up the elevator or take the longer route to class instead of the shortcut.

Although it's not easy to change your routine and implement stretches into your daily life, it's important to be aware of the risks associated with sitting for too long. The next time you find yourself in this situation, check your posture and make time for some quick stretches. By being more informed and knowing ways to help treat pain related to prolonged sitting, you can start working toward a healthier you. Visit the Barnes Center at The Arch concerning activities related to stretchy or physical activity.

#### For more information:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/stretching/art-20047931>

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/25/hunched-over-your-laptop-all-day-these-stretches-are-for-you/>



# E-CIGARETTES AND COVID-19: A DOUBLE WHAMMY

## THE NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS OF E-CIGARETTE USAGE WITH COVID-19

By Anjali Sharma

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David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**E**-cigarettes, often referred to as vaping, have become a large part of teenage culture over the past few years. Whether a teenager has tried one once or uses them every day, e-cigarettes are highly addictive and harmful to the body, even more so for anyone with COVID-19.

Advertisers have directed ads on social media platforms, such as Instagram, targeting teenagers to buy vaping products. But they do not supply any on disclaimers the harmful health effects of vaping. Teenagers need to become aware of how serious the complications with e-cigarettes are, especially if they contract COVID-19. E-cigarette use and COVID-19 are a bad combination, as the likelihood of symptoms and long-term lung damage increases.

The use of e-cigarettes weakens the immune system and damages the lungs by the inhalation of toxic substances. The mechanisms of how a vape works are essential to understanding its detrimental effects on the lungs.

A vape essentially heats a liquid to such a high temperature that it turns into vapor as we inhale it into our lungs. Our body's resting temperature of 98.6 degrees is much cooler than that of a vape. When the vapor enters the lungs, it cools and returns to its original liquid form. This is what is believed to cause lung damage, according to pulmonologist Dr. Kimberly Robinson, director of critical care services at UMass Memorial Marlborough Hospital. The liquid inside a vape contains harmful chemicals that include nicotine, formaldehyde and arsenic.

Vapers who contract COVID-19 are at higher risk of lung damage. The chemicals from vaping cause inflammation and damage to the entire lungs, from the large bronchi down to the alveoli. According to experts at Johns Hopkins Medicine, it is at these small alveoli where CO<sub>2</sub> and oxygen are exchanged. The damage from vaping hinders this exchange, causing harmful effects. COVID-19 similarly impacts the respiratory system, leading to lung inflammation and causing the small alveoli to fill with inflammatory fluid. Although the mechanisms of lung damage differ between vaping and COVID-19, the end result is the same: respiratory compromise.



If you're smoking a chemical that "causes inflammation in the lungs or a problem with gas exchange...and then you contract a virus, that virus would have a better chance at entering the lung tissue and making you sicker," says Robinson. When e-cigarettes users contract COVID-19, they have a higher likelihood of developing more severe complications associated with the virus, such as pneumonia and severely decreased oxygenation.

Vaping and COVID-19 are both public health crises. Vaping is more commonly used among teenagers and young adult populations, whereas COVID-19 can affect all ages. Teenagers should be made more aware of the issues and health concerns of vaping as well as the serious effects of COVID-19 among e-cigarette users.

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### For more information:

[www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/what-coronavirus-does-to-the-lungs](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/what-coronavirus-does-to-the-lungs)

# NATURAL AS A LIFESTYLE

## NATURAL INGREDIENTS VS. SYNTHETIC PRODUCTS

By Renata Husted '17

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**M**ost people are aware of the negative effects of synthetic dyes, flavors, and preservatives. Perhaps that bag of Gummy candy with red dye #40 listed as the third ingredient is not the best snack for you. But what many people may not know is that harmful ingredients creep beyond the food realm, moving into the world of beauty and health products. Just as we don't want formaldehyde in our maraschino cherries, we also don't want it in our body washes or eye shadows. And although it may not be that easy to skip out on colorful candy, steering clear of unhealthy personal products can be much simpler.

Some of the most common harmful chemicals found in personal care items are called parabens. These chemicals, while approved by the Food and Drug Administration, have long been subject to studies linking them to cancer, reproductive system issues, endocrine disruption and developmental issues. These studies raise valid concerns over the use of harsh chemicals, despite the F.D.A. dismissing the findings because of the small sample sizes used. And beauty and personal care products that do not contain parabens or artificial colorings/dyes are produced in more sustainable methods that are often vegan and cruelty-free. In other words, all-natural products are better for all living creatures and the world we live in.

Here are some common all-natural items that can be whipped up with ingredients you probably already have at home.

### Apple Cider Vinegar Sore Throat Solution

Skip the menthol-laden cough drops; they only soothe a scratchy throat. Instead, let this honey apple solution fight the source of that sore throat while also preventing new ones.

Mix 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar, one cup of warm water and two tablespoons of honey. Drink slowly while still warm. Repeat up to 4 times a day while symptoms persist.

### Chamomile Face Cleanser

Chamomile is a natural soothing agent that is great for sensitive skin. The olive oil adds a touch of moisture without being too heavy.

- 1/4 cup castile soap
- 1/4 cup brewed chamomile tea
- 3/4 teaspoon olive oil
- 8 drops essential oil (lavender works well for dry skin; tea tree for oily skin)

### Coconut Oil Body/Lip Scrub

Scrub away dead skin while simultaneously moisturizing it with this simple mix. In addition, you can skip manufactured lipsticks that often contain lead, a neurotoxin that has been linked to several fertility and developmental difficulties, according to Safecosmetics.org.

Mix one part sugar, two parts coconut oil and a few drops of your favorite essential oil.

Add beet root powder, all-natural food coloring or cinnamon for a soft pigment lip color.

### Natural Mint Toothpaste

For about 63 cents a batch, this toothpaste efficiently cleans teeth and freshens breath without the addition of triclosan, a common antibacterial chemical found in dental products that has been linked to cancer and disruption of the endocrine system.

- 2/3 cups of baking soda
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 10 to 15 drops of peppermint essential oil
- Water to desired consistency

### Shea Butter Deodorant

Deodorants are one of the most common personal items that contain parabens and other harmful ingredients. Aluminum especially warrants concern because it has been linked to long-term problems such as Alzheimer's disease.

- 3 tablespoons of coconut oil
- 3 tablespoons of baking soda
- 2 tablespoons of shea butter
- 2 tablespoons of organic cornstarch
- Favorite essential oils for scent

Melt coconut oil and shea butter until liquid, add baking soda and cornstarch. Mix and add essential oils. Store in glass jar or old deodorant stick for easier application.

### Make-Your-Own-Scent Room Freshener

Scents such as Island Breeze and Springtime Blossom come with more than just a cool name. These commercialized air fresheners often contain damaging chemicals, such as various forms of phthalates. The Natural Resources Defense Council says phthalates are known to cause hormonal abnormalities, birth defects, and reproductive problems.

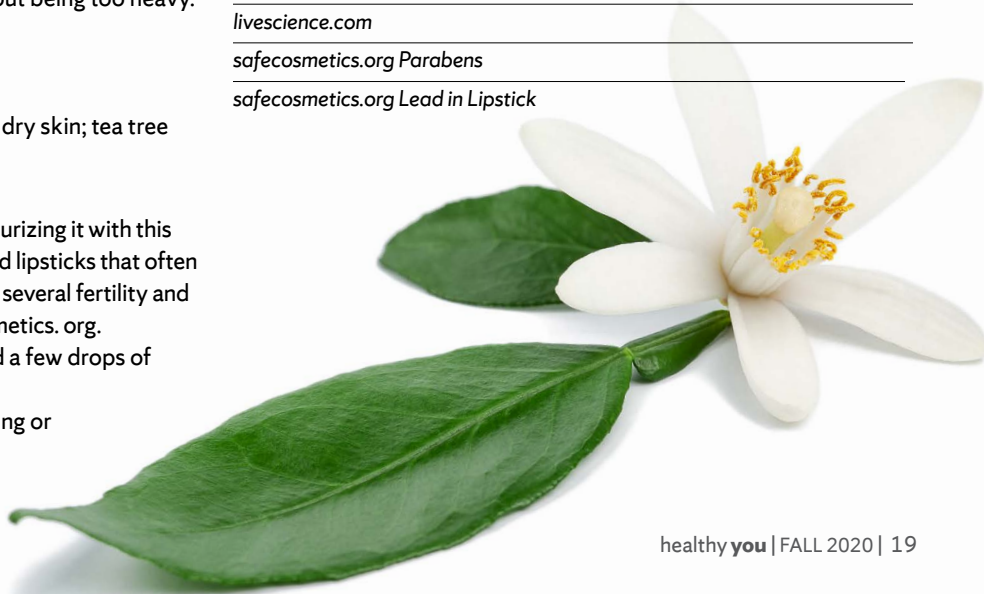
Fill up a spray bottle with water and add a few drops of essential oil. Which oil you choose depends on the mood you want to set. Use these for an invigorating mood: peppermint, lemon, tea tree oil, jasmine or rosemary. For a more relaxing environment: lavender, rose, ylang ylang or bergamot. Try mixing scents for a twist.

#### For more information:

[livescience.com](http://livescience.com)

[safecosmetics.org](http://safecosmetics.org) Parabens

[safecosmetics.org](http://safecosmetics.org) Lead in Lipstick



# THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT WHOLE GRAINS

## UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF EATING WHOLE GRAINS

By Janet Pease  
Former Head of Collections and Research Services  
Syracuse University Libraries

**S**ome of the key ingredients in a healthy diet are whole grains. Experts recommend that adults have three servings (48 grams) of whole grains a day, but currently only about eight percent of U.S. adults are getting that much. And some consumers who think they are meeting that requirement might not be, at least in part because of misleading ingredient labeling on packaging. We need to become super-sleuths.

### WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, grains are an important source of many nutrients. These include fiber, protein, several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and folate) and minerals (iron, magnesium and selenium). Research studies have shown that whole grains as part of a healthy diet may help reduce blood cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes.

### WHAT DOES WHOLE GRAIN MEAN?

Every grain starts as a whole grain and has three parts: the bran (outer skin that contains antioxidants, B vitamins and fiber), the germ (the part that grows into a new plant when pollinated; contains numerous vitamins, protein, minerals and healthy fats) and the endosperm (contains carbohydrates and smaller amounts of protein, vitamins and minerals).

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), to be called a whole-grain food, the food must contain all three of these components in the same proportion as in nature, even if the grain has been processed or refined (e.g., cracked, crushed, rolled and/or cooked).

When grains are processed and refined—the most common practice for making breads, cereals and pastas—the bran and germ are removed. As a result, grains become less nutritious, losing up to 25 percent of their original protein content, as well as other essential nutrients. Manufacturers may later fortify the product by adding vitamins, minerals and fiber during processing, but a naturally whole grain is a healthier choice.

### SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Food labels provide a lot of misleading information that consumers need to wade through to find the real deal.

As consumers have become more health-conscious, “made with whole grains” has become a huge draw in grocery stores, and the market is expected to grow to an estimated \$46.2 billion by 2022. Unfortunately, being made with whole grains does not mean that



the product is made only with whole grains. In reality, there could be few whole grains in the product. And words such as stoneground, cracked wheat, multigrain or seven-grain are also misleading. These terms indicate nothing about whether the grains are whole or refined.

### CHECK LABELS CAREFULLY

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is trying to get the FDA to address the misleading information, but what can you do to make sure you are getting the real thing?

Read the labels on products carefully. You cannot go by just the name or the big print touting health benefits on the package of processed foods.

The ingredient list is what you need to look at. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Make sure that whole grain, whole wheat, whole wheat flour or whole oats is listed first.

Be aware, though, that just because a product contains whole grains, it does not guarantee that it's a health food. Granola bars, for example, may be made with whole grains but may also include a lot of added sugar or salt.

### PARTIAL LIST OF WHOLE GRAIN TYPES

- Barley
- Buckwheat
- Farro
- Millet
- Oats (including oatmeal)
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Wild and Brown Rice
- Whole Rye
- Whole Wheat

#### For more information:

Oldways Whole Grain Council: [wholegrainscouncil.org](http://wholegrainscouncil.org)

U.S. Department of Agriculture: [usda.gov](http://usda.gov)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration: [fda.gov](http://fda.gov)

# CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

## A SYRACUSE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE

By Brooke Kirchner  
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Syracuse University can sometimes feel like our own little bubble from the outside world. Break that bubble by volunteering alongside students like Pa-Zong Bina Lee '20 at the Campus Connect program through Hendricks Chapel. The program is run by the Lutheran Campus Ministry. Lee is the president of Campus Connect program, which includes many outreach programs. This is just one of the 300-plus student organizations at Syracuse University eager for you to get involved.

The outreach program that Lee works with is the Success Saturday Program that assists middle- and high-school-age refugee students. The program works with refugee students from Myanmar, formerly Burma, who now reside in Onondaga County. This is a great option for those who are interested in making a difference and getting involved in the greater Syracuse community.

Not only do the volunteers help with homework but they also create a community within the program.

"We do beyond tutoring," Lee says. "Most importantly we have fostered amazing relationships with the students and their community." One of Lee's favorite parts of the program is the community, as volunteers are often invited to family gathering and events. The program hosts a variety of activities, including group dinners and workshops, such as a public speaking workshop that Lee led. She explains the personal growth that occurs when volunteering: "We all teach each other something."

Volunteering is not all about the impact you are making but also

about how the people you are volunteering with impact you. Lee explained that it has taught her how to build a community and how to better work with others.

Being social and getting involved is critical for your mental and physical health. According to the *Journal of BMC Public Health*, "the beneficial effects of volunteering on health outcomes have been well documented. Research has found that participation in voluntary services is significantly predictive of better mental and physical health." Participating in some type of volunteering can improve self-esteem and life satisfaction, and decrease depressive thoughts. Volunteering can create a sense of community with the people you volunteer alongside while also creating a social circle for yourself.

Even through the pandemic, like many other volunteer organizations, the Campus Connect program still takes place. It has worked out a modified tutoring program scheduled through Zoom, where students can attend different breakout rooms for different subjects that they may need tutoring in. Volunteering through Zoom can be a great way to stay connected throughout COVID-19.

Make an impact at Syracuse University by getting involved outside our college environment and into the Syracuse community. Volunteering with the Success Saturday Program could be a great option for those who want to get involved and improve their mental and physical health. For more information or to sign up, contact the Rev. Gail Riina at the Lutheran Campus Ministry through Hendricks Chapel at [griina@syr.edu](mailto:griina@syr.edu).

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### For more information:

<https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-017-4561-8>





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