

HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter
www.astate.edu/conhp



Back To School Health

Introduction

Health: the condition of being sound in body, mind, or spirit; a condition in which someone or something is thriving or doing well

The Center for Disease Control identifies 9 core topics that should be covered when it comes to “health” which include: healthy eating, personal health and wellness, mental and emotional health, physical activity, alcohol and other drugs, tobacco, safety, violence prevention, and sexual health.

It is that time of year again—back to school and we each have the opportunity to form new habits and routines to optimize our health. Let’s take a look at some of these components of health and see what improvements could be made to have a healthy year!

Healthy Eating

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020, a healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Stays within your daily calorie needs

In addition to following these general guidelines, be sure to read the food

labels to ensure that you are consuming the proper portion. Instead of skipping meals and making up for it during one meal, try to space smaller meals throughout the day to boost your metabolism. While the literature varies with how much water to drink each day, it is still clear that consuming plenty of fluid each day is important to keep each body system functioning properly. Reduce sugar-sweetened beverages in your diet.

Personal Health and Wellness

- Wash your hands- a proper wash is at least 20 seconds!
- Avoid contact with your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid sharing food and beverages.
- Wear flip flops in the shower to avoid getting viruses and bacteria in the dorm shower.
- If a friend is ill, avoid being around them. If you feel ill, respect others.
- Avoid all-nighters. It is recommended for young adults to get 7-9 hours of sleep every night.
- Keep immunizations up to date and get a flu shot.
 - Mass flu clinic is September 26th at the Red Wolf Center!
- If you suspect illness, go to the doctor!

Mental and Emotional Health

If you are a freshman, expect things to change, as you are in a new

environment. It is important to get involved and connect with others to boost your mental and emotional health. There are a variety of organizations to get plugged into at Arkansas State University. Check out this list to see if one of these registered student organizations appeals to you!

<https://www.astate.edu/rso/>

Other mental and emotional health tips:

- Focus on time management.
- Find a hobby to help cope with stress.
- Set goals for school to keep you motivated.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help when needed.

Physical Activity

Exercise is an important component to health. American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) guidelines recommend 30-60 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise five days per week or 20-60 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise three days per week.

In order to achieve these recommendations, take advantage of your membership at the Red Wolf Center which includes fun, interactive classes and intramurals!

Physical activity benefits:

- Control weight

- Combat health conditions and diseases
- Improve mood
- Boost energy
- Promote better sleep

Exercise is Medicine (EIM) is a new Registered Student Organization at Arkansas State University. EIM aspires to assess the university's physical activity level, counsel and assist individuals in meeting the National Activity Guidelines, connect interdisciplinary programs, and make movement a part of the daily campus culture.

For more information, contact Dr. Shawn Drake (sdrake@state.edu). This organization is open to all majors.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Effects of alcohol on the body:

- Alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways, and can affect the way the brain works.
- Drinking, whether that be a lot over time or too much on a single occasion, can lead to cardiomyopathy, arrhythmias, stroke, and/or high blood pressure.
- Heavy drinking can damage the liver.
- Alcohol causes the pancreas to produce toxic substances that can lead to pancreatitis.
- Studies show drinking too much can increase the risk of developing certain cancers.
- Drinking too much weakens your immune system, making your body an easier target for disease.

More deaths, illnesses and disabilities stem from substance abuse than from any other preventable health condition. Living with substance dependence results in a higher risk of unintentional injuries, accidents, risk of domestic violence, medical problems, and death.

Tobacco

Smoking or using smokeless tobacco increases the risk of:

- Heart attack and other heart disease

- Blood clots
- Cancer
- Lung problems such as COPD or asthma
- Decreased ability to taste and smell
- Macular degeneration which can lead to loss of sight
- Wrinkling of the skin

If you are currently using tobacco, like any addiction, quitting tobacco is difficult. For help, surround yourself around others who will motivate you to quit for the sake of your health. Speak with a health care provider about nicotine replacement therapy and consider joining a smoking cessation program for accountability.

Sexual Health and Safety

First and foremost, realize the only way to completely prevent getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is to be abstinent. If you are sexually active, the best way to avoid getting any STI is to have only one partner and use condoms. Birth control does not help prevent STIs. A safe environment for more information on sexual health is the Student Health Center.

Be aware that sexual assault and rape does happen at college. Here are some tips to better protect yourself from being sexually assaulted:

- Walk in well-lit areas with a friend if you are out at night. If a friend is unavailable, use the campus security escorts to walk with you back to your dorm.
- If you feel uncomfortable while walking on campus, there are emergency stations. By pressing the button, University Police Department will be alerted.
- Never go out alone—there is safety in numbers.
- Make sure a friend or roommate knows where you are at all times.
- If you choose to drink, be aware of your limits. Alcohol

affects your perception, memory, and slows your body's reaction time.

- Protect yourself from date-rape drugs by following these tips:
 - Don't drink something you did not open yourself.
 - Don't share drinks with anyone or drink from a punch bowl.
 - Don't leave your drink and come back later to drink it.

If you are sexually assaulted, contact the Rape Crisis Center Hotline at 1-870-933-9449. It's very important to talk about your feelings with an experienced counselor. Arkansas State offers counseling services provided by licensed mental health practitioners.

References

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- <https://www.astate.edu/>

Other News:

**If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at hanrahan@astate.edu.

The Arkansas State University Employee Wellness Newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Health questions can be addressed to Dean Susan Hanrahan, Ph.D., ext. 3112 or hanrahan@astate.edu. Produced by Karinda Polk, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.

