

An International Student's Guide to Health and Wellness at Northern Kentucky University

Dear Northern Kentucky University International Student:

Proper nutrition, management of stress and adequate medical care are essential to your overall health and wellness. The goal of this pamphlet is to provide you with some education and resources regarding these topics.

Nutrition

- Healthy diet is important for growth, development, and academic performance.
- Good nutrition, combined with exercise, can enable people of all ages to work productively and feel their best.
- Eating the right foods can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoporosis, and certain kinds of cancers. Maintaining a proper diet means getting both enough calories and the proper nutrients from the foods one consumes.
- In this country, people tend to eat more calories than their body needs. This results in weight gain.
- Eating a daily diet that includes proper proportions of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and healthy fats can promote health and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. By going to www.mypyramid.gov, one can discover the steps to a healthier weight. In addition, this website features dietary guidelines, a menu planner and tracker, and the option to develop an individualized food guide.

- A healthy diet is both delicious and diverse. It is rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean meat and poultry, fish, and fat free or low fat dairy products. Learning to make good food choices is of great importance for having a healthy life, especially for college students with a very busy lifestyle.
- Before deciding on what kind of foods to eat, one should first know the nutrition facts of the particular food they are about to consume. To find the nutrition facts for commonly served foods, go to www.nutritiondata.com.
- The website for NKU dining, www.dineoncampus.com/nku, has many features that a student can utilize for their benefit. For instance, clicking on the "Dining Location" icon will show all of the restaurants on campus and what is on their menus. By clicking on the "Total Health" icon, one will find many tools such as nutrition charts, nutrition information, and a nutrition journal. Also under the "Be Heard" icon, one can submit their own recipes.
- Before purchasing a drink at the Starbucks in the new Student Union, one can go to www.starbucks.com to find nutrition facts about their various drinks. One can also build the desired Starbucks drink and see just how many calories and grams of fat it contains. When ordering a drink, asking Starbucks to make the drink "light" and to omit the whip cream will cut the calories by over a half.
- There are many different disorders that can develop when people do not eat right. Some common ones include bulimia, anorexia, and compulsive eating. Bulimia is purging after eating by vomiting, abusing laxatives, or over-exercising. Anorexia is basically starving oneself. Compulsive eating is when one overeats. If you feel that you are having problems that are similar to these, do not hesitate to seek help or counseling.
- NKU provides many different types of counseling services for its students. By going to <http://hcp.nku.edu> and clicking on "Counseling Services", one can explore the different websites for the emergency, health, counseling, and prevention services available at NKU. Not only do these website pages provide an in-depth overview of the services offered, they also provide links to other reputable websites that may be of help.

Stress Management

- Stress management is also very important to one's overall health and well-being. Stress is the body's response to the events that upset our personal balance. Stress affects the body, mind, and one's behavior, but specific responses to stress vary from person to person. Some examples of harmful stress responses include backaches, stomach problems, skin outbreaks, increased blood pressure, crying, moodiness, and increased susceptibility to disease. For more information about stress, go to www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm.
- There are a number of ways in which one can reduce stress in their life and in turn, maintain a healthier lifestyle. According to the American Heart Association (www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3047939), the following are some ways to fight stress:
 1. Talking with family and friends.

Maintaining contact with family and friends back at home is especially important for international students that might otherwise feel lonely while they are away.
 2. Daily physical activity.

The Centers for Disease Control recommend at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, every week (www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html).
 3. Accepting the things you cannot change.
 4. Remembering to laugh.
 5. Giving up bad habits.

For example, instead of using alcohol, smoking or caffeine to help cope with stress, stay well-hydrated with non-alcoholic, low-caffeine, and low-sugar beverages (such as Gatorade G2 or Crystal Light) and resolve to use other methods to cope with stress.

6. Slowing down.

Some ways of slowing down include the use of relaxation techniques such as guided imagery, deep breathing, meditation, massage therapy or progressive muscle relaxation. For more information go to:

<http://hcp.nku.edu/counselingservices/clienteducation/relaxationtechniques.php> OR
www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_relief_meditation_yoga_relaxation.htm.

7. Getting enough sleep.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends getting 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. For some helpful tips, see

<http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/hygiene.htm>.

8. Getting organized.

Setting goals and learning time management are very helpful ways to become more organized. To learn more about time management, contact Counseling Services at NKU or refer to <http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/studytime.shtml>.

9. Practicing giving back.

Volunteering and helping others may be a very rewarding and relaxing activity.

10. Trying not to worry.

For help managing anxiety, either contact Counseling Services at NKU or refer to <http://hcp.nku.edu/counselingservices/clienteducation/managinganxiety.php>. For help with schoolwork, NKU has compiled a list of helpful academic web resources at <http://lap.nku.edu/tutoring/resources/students.php>. In addition, NKU also has tutoring available on campus. For more information on tutoring, go to <http://lap.nku.edu/tutoring/index.php>. The Writing Center (<http://lap.nku.edu/writingcenter/index.php>) and Math Center (<http://lap.nku.edu/mathcenter/index.php>) at NKU also offer free assistance with academic work.

Accessing Medical Care

- In the event of a life-threatening emergency, call 911 for immediate assistance.
- If you become ill while attending school at NKU, you may visit NKU Health, Counseling and Prevention Services, located in University Center, Room 300. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
 - To schedule an appointment, call (859) 572-5650. For a list of available services, visit http://hcp.nku.edu/docs/HCP_Departmental_Bro.pdf. NKU Health, Counseling and Prevention Services may refer you to another facility if they are unable to treat your illness.
- To find a healthcare provider outside of NKU that is covered by the NKU International Student Insurance Plan, go to <http://www.lewermark.com/> and do the following:
 - Click on “International”
 - Click on “Find a Doctor or Pharmacy” (on upper left corner)
 - Under “My Great-West Healthcare”, click “Click here to find a provider”
 - Here you will be able to search for a doctor by name, the doctor’s specialty area, or your medical condition.
- For medical problems that need to be addressed urgently, you may go to one of the emergency rooms at the area hospitals. The following are several of the closest hospitals:

◦ St. Luke East 85 N. Grand Avenue Fort Thomas, KY 41075 (859) 572-3151 www.stlukehospitals.com	◦ St. Luke West 7380 Turfway Road Florence, KY 41017 (859) 212-5440 www.stlukehospitals.com
◦ St. Elizabeth South One Medical Village Drive Edgewood, KY 41017 (859) 301-2250 www.stelizabeth.com	◦ St. Elizabeth North 401 E. 20 th Street Covington, KY 41014 (859) 292-4353 www.stelizabeth.com

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