

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Managing your health as a UNIVERSITY STUDENT

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We hear the phrase, “health is one’s most valuable asset” being thrown around all the time. While we don’t necessarily deny it, concerns about our health generally take a backseat in our brains as we manoeuvre our days. Especially as university students whose schedules are jam packed with back to back classes or extra-curricular activities on top of long commutes for some, it’s difficult to prioritise health in our everyday lives. However, negligence can catch up to us, and when they do, there’s little to do but wish we prioritised our health before it was too late.

Things can be worse for people with chronic illnesses, such as asthma, migraine, gastritis etc, as they can be easily triggered by some of our day to day activities. As school students, we could take sick days to recuperate, but simply missing one day of classes often results in rather heavy penalties for university goers. So, here are some tips on how to manage your health as a university student:

Lead a healthy lifestyle

This seems like a no brainer, sure, but how many of us can actually say we abide by this? Most of us have our vices, and it’s not entirely our fault either. Due to our busy schedules, having timely, balanced meals can prove difficult.

But we should at least make an effort to take our meals, not stay up too late at night, and not sacrifice our 7 to 9 hours of sleep in order to keep up with the workload. Drinking enough water is crucial, especially due to the harsh climate. Trying to limit our screen time is important, even though it’s easier said than done due to much of our coursework being reliant on electronic devices. However, try setting a threshold for yourself to limit too much unnecessary screen time.

Know your triggers

If you have some form of chronic illness, it’s imperative for you to know your triggers. It’s

best not to ignore dietary restrictions in case of allergy, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), lactose intolerance etc. For migraines and asthma, the triggers may be trickier to maintain. Make sure to take protective measures like umbrellas, caps, sunglasses, sunscreens etc if you’re going to be out in the sun for a long time. Carry necessary medication and inhalers at all times, and use a mask if you have to use public transport. If you suffer

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from anaemia or low blood pressure, make sure to eat properly, keep some snacks on hand at all times, and take your supplements. Having regular checkups at the doctors is also recommended.

Take precautions for seasonal illnesses

Changing seasons can bring about lots of health inconveniences. The temperature spikes and rainfall can lead to colds and seasonal flus, not to mention the dangers posed by dengue. COVID-19, influenza, pneumonia, chicken pox are also illnesses to look out for. It may be difficult to defend against some of these illnesses, but necessary vaccinations, measures against mosquitoes, as well as maintaining good personal hygiene can help fortify us against them.

Communicate with faculty members

Despite all the precautionary measures in the world, it’s natural to fall sick sometimes. In such cases, it’s best to be transparent with your faculty members and present necessary proof for deadline extensions, makeup quizzes and assignments, mandatory attendance marks etc. If your university offers medical facilities, it’s likely that they will write you certificates that can get you excused if you’re sick.

University life is fast paced and often unforgiving of obstacles, but being negligent of health causes adverse effects in the long run. It’s also necessary to take care of your mental health as it’s no less important than your physical well-being.



WHAT INSTITUTIONS CAN DO TO SUPPORT STUDENTS’ MENTAL HEALTH

Exuding a sense of positivity and inclusivity

Support from teachers and regular campaigns to spread awareness regarding the matter would not only allow students to be educated regarding such sensitive matters, but would also allow institutions to be aware of their students’ mental and emotional wellbeing.

Hiring professional psychologists

Talking to these psychologists can be beneficial for struggling students, which may not be the case if they talked with teachers with only a few weeks of training under their belt.

Arranging seminars and mental health workshops

These workshops should be geared towards explaining the harmful effects of keeping their struggles secret. As well as debunking myths, they should also look to radiate a positive energy, giving students the support they may often need.

