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## THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH IN COLLEGE

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Photo credit: Majesty Benaya



Being young is great. You're able to eat seemingly unlimited food without weight gain or any noticeable difference in health. Unfortunately, that ability deteriorates with age. It's important to create a healthy lifestyle at a young age because the habits you create now will affect you positively or negatively throughout your entire life. If all you eat is junk now then it will be much harder to switch to a healthier diet later on.

A healthy lifestyle is paramount in college because an unhealthy diet, inadequate sleep and lack of exercise can be detrimental not only to your health but also to your grades. When your body isn't operating at the highest level of functioning then it is much more difficult to study, write papers, and pay attention in class.

As the semester goes on it can be hard to ensure that you get enough sleep at night, especially when midterms come rolling around. One late night after another makes it hard to stay awake in class and then the vicious caffeine cycle occurs. The caffeine cycle occurs when you need to consume caffeine to keep awake in class, but then it keeps you from going to sleep at night which causes you to drink more caffeine the next day.

The best way to combat sleep deprivation is to stick to a set time to go to bed. The first few nights will be tough because most likely you'll be lying in bed wide awake, but eventually your body will adjust and it will be possible to get your 8-9 hours of sleep per night. Sleep loss is connected to impaired concentration and attentiveness, so you'll be a better student if you get the recommended amount of sleep.

The food you choose to eat will affect how your body functions either positively or negatively. A college student has to be able to focus their mind for a number of hours during the day and a healthy diet will assist in that.

The Caf can be an excellent place to eat healthily. It offers many fruits and vegetables that are vital to a healthy diet as well as tons of protein in different types of meat.

To eat healthily in the Caf you also need to avoid cheeseburgers and fries, always visit the salad bar, drink water instead of sugary drinks, control your portion size and make sure you're getting balanced meals with protein and carbohydrates and good fats.

Exercising is also important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The "Freshmen 15" can sneak up on you during a tough semester, but exercise helps you to maintain a healthy weight. It's also a great way to take a break from studying and refresh your mind. The American Heart Association recommends 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise five days a week. Instead of watching an episode of *The Office*, it would be much more beneficial to spend that time at the Eagles Fitness Center.

The NU Wellness Center offers many ways to keep students healthy so that they can be more focused on their studies. Students have access to a massage chair, light therapy, and counseling.

Striving for a healthy lifestyle will improve your productivity as a student because it will ensure that you get enough sleep and that

proper nutrients are consumed. The lifestyle habits you pick now will reflect how your health will be in the future.

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