

APRIL 2024

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA MEDICAL AND COUNSELLING STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Hi UC,

We hope you are adjusting to Semester 1 of 2024 with ease. Whether this be your first year or final year of university, we would like to remind all students of the importance of maintaining good health and wellbeing.

Health and wellbeing status can be reduced, maintained, and enhanced through a variety of avenues.

This newsletter provides you with more information on the following:

- Smoking and Vaping
- Vaccinations
- Caffeine
- Nutrition



SMOKING AND VAPING

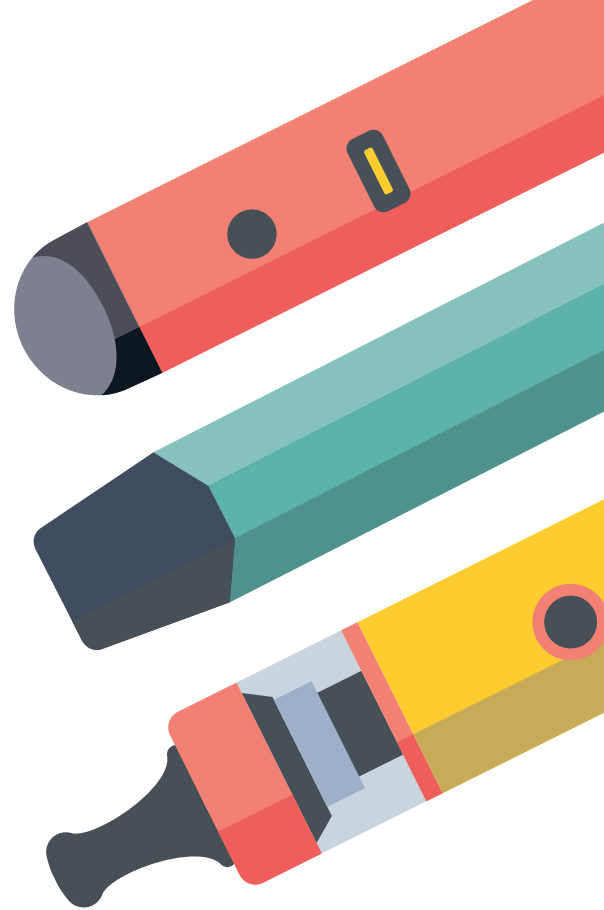
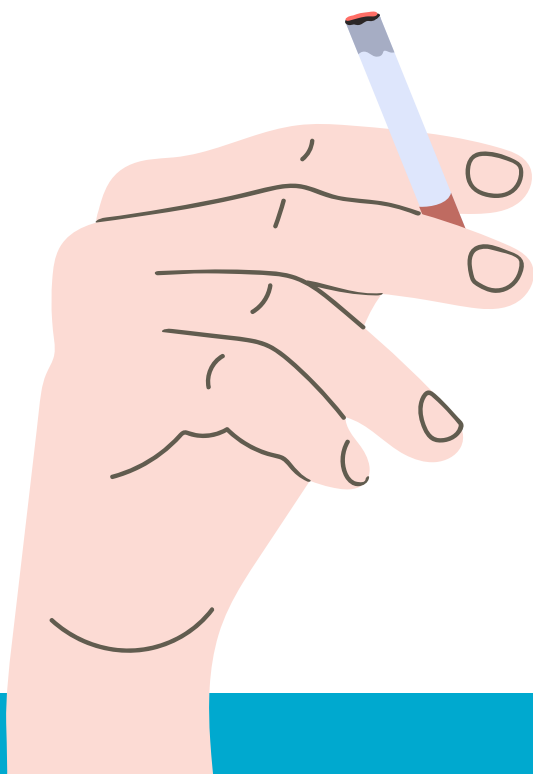
Did you know?

Tobacco smoke contains more than 7000 HARMFUL chemicals

Within 10 seconds of inhaling smoke, these harmful chemicals will have already reached your brain, heart, and other organs.

The nicotine in tobacco is ADDICTIVE

Smoking causes nicotine dependence, which is directly connected to your mood. When nicotine levels drop in the body, feelings of depression and anxiety are induced.



There is NO SAFE LEVEL of smoking

Even second-hand or passive smoking can cause adverse health outcomes.

Vapes are NOT SAFE

There is a common misunderstanding that vapes are safer than cigarettes. Whilst scientists are still learning about vapes, they are not considered safe.

42 chemicals that are known to cause DAMAGE to the lungs and airways have been found in vapes

Even though the amount of each chemical may be small, the damage of long-term exposure is widely unknown.

Chemicals found in biofuel, paint thinner and bug killer have also been found in vapes

These chemicals move from the lungs into your blood, flowing through your whole body.

ARE VAPES BAD FOR YOU?

There are many unknowns about vaping including the long-term effects. However, we do know that emerging data has linked vaping with asthma, chronic lung disease and cardiovascular disease, and can also increase your risk of anxiety and depression. Vaping also exposes the user to a multitude of chemicals which are known not to be safe. Some of the chemicals which have been identified include caffeine, nail polish remover, weed killer, pesticides and flavourings linked with toxic effects and respiratory irritation.

Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as traditional cigarettes as they both contain nicotine; in fact, **some e-cigarettes can contain up to 50 times as much nicotine as in traditional cigarettes**. Vaping is NOT a tool to help one stop smoking.

Vapes can be categorised under a variety of names including:

- E-cigarettes
- E-cigars
- E-pipes
- Vape pens
- Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)
- JUULs
- E-hookahs etc.

Whilst many falsely believe that vapes are safer than cigarettes, the little amount of information we have on vapes is what makes them so scary.

A study funded by Lung Foundation Australia, and NIB Australia revealed:

- 100% of e-liquids were inaccurately labelled
- 100% contained chemicals with unknown effects on respiratory health
- 21% contained nicotine despite this being illegal in Australia
- 62% contained chemicals likely to be toxic if vaped repeatedly

These chemicals are directly related to adverse health outcomes including the following:

- Nicotine addiction - nicotine levels can be very high in vapes and withdrawal can be very severe
- Intentional and unintentional poisoning
- Burns and injuries
- Lung injury
- Acute nicotine toxicity causing seizures

Vaping can set off fire alarms

- The cost of false fire alarm is currently \$1500 in the ACT, with the responsible person required to pay the bill
- The lithium batteries in disposed vapes have also been responsible for rubbish fires

There are many effective tools which can assist with smoking cessation. If you are vaping and wish to stop, make an appointment with the UC Medical and Counselling Centre.

For more information on the dangers of vaping, visit the **Cancer Institute NSW**.

DID YOU KNOW?

As of 1st January 2024, disposable single use vape importation has been banned. This means the content of vapes and black market cigarettes is completely unregulated.



TOBACCO-FREE UNIVERSITY

To promote a healthy and safe environment, the University of Canberra is Tobacco-free. Smoking, including vaping, is not permitted on any University-controlled premises or land.

This decision reflected the community's preference, where majority of students identified that a tobacco-free university is preferred in a 2015 survey.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What is considered a tobacco product?

- Cigarettes
- Cigars
- Pipes
- Water pipes
- Electronic nicotine devices (e-cigarettes and vaporisers)
- Any other implements that emit harmful or toxic smoke for the purpose of inhaling
- Any substance containing tobacco leaf (e.g., hookah tobacco, chewing tobacco, dipping tobacco)



My vape does not say it contains tobacco. Can I still smoke it?

Since December 2023, all areas that smoking is banned, **VAPING IS BANNED TOO**. Vapes are recognised under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act as a smoking product and cannot be used on campus. Breaking this law can result in on-the-spot fines.



What should I do if I see someone smoking on campus?

This conversation can be difficult, here are some tips.

- Refer to the signs on campus
- Be mindful when explaining the policy – remember that smoking is an addiction
- Smile, introduce yourself and remind them that the University is tobacco-free
- Respectfully request the smoker move to a smoking area off campus
- If the person complies, remember to thank them
- If the person becomes angry or confrontational, excuse yourself and report the incident



HELPFUL TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN QUITTING

To avoid health risks for yourself and those around you, the safest option is to quit smoking and vaping.

Quitting smoking and vaping can cause withdrawal symptoms that may be challenging to navigate. These can include:

- Cravings
- Irritability
- Anxiety and depression
- Restless sleep
- Trouble concentrating

Whilst it may seem impossible to alleviate these symptoms in the beginning, there are several resources available to help. You are not alone in your journey.

Here are some helpful tips to remember when quitting:

- Physical activity can curb restlessness
- Limit activities that require high levels of concentration in the first few days
- Troubled sleeping can be improved with limiting caffeine, limiting screen time, and ensuring your room is dark, quiet and cool
- Introduce healthy snacks between meals to accommodate for increased appetite
- Connecting with friends and family can alleviate anxiety/depression symptoms



For assistance in smoking cessation, the UC Medical and Counselling Centre is here to help. With Psychologists and GPs trained in this area, an appointment may be all you need to begin your journey to cessation. Appointments can be booked by calling 02 6201 2351, booking through HotDoc, or visiting the clinic and speaking to our reception staff.

Smoking/Vaping Cessation Supports

- **Quitline** counsellors are available to answer any questions about vapes on **13 7848 (13 QUIT)**. Quitline is a telephone-based service offering information and advice. Quitline counsellors provide tips and strategies and help people to plan their quit attempts, based on their own needs and preferences. They can also help parents and carers think of ways to approach a conversation about vaping with young people.
- The **Aboriginal Quitline** is also available on **13 7848**. Run by Aboriginal counsellors, the Aboriginal Quitline is a telephone-based confidential advice and support service.
- If you require assistance in a language other than English, Quitline has counsellors who speak Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. You can ask to speak to one of these counsellors. For people who prefer to speak in a different language, Quitline uses the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS).
- The Cancer Institute NSW **ICanQuit** website provides information on quitting methods, links to support groups and top tips to help young people quit.
- Too much nicotine from vapes can cause nicotine poisoning. If you think someone has been poisoned by Liquid Nicotine, please call the poisons centre on 13 11 26 immediately or 000 if it is an emergency. For more information see **NSW Poisons Information Centre**.

VACCINATE AGAINST THE FLU BEFORE IT INFECTS YOU



Vaccinating not only protects **you** from the flu, it also protects those **around** you.

The flu can cause serious illness and even death in otherwise healthy adults. According to the Department of Health and Aged Care, it is recommended that everyone aged 6 months and older gets an influenza (flu) vaccination EVERY YEAR. This vaccination is particularly important for:

- People 65 years and older
- Pregnant women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- Children 6 months to less than 5 years
- People with certain medical conditions e.g. asthma, diabetes etc.

I had a flu vaccination last year; do I need it again?

Yes, strains of influenza circulating in the community change on a yearly basis. The vaccines are updated each year to protect against the new strain. A flu vaccination is recommended for everyone.

When should I get the flu vaccine?

The flu season in Australia is usually from June to September, therefore it is recommended to vaccinate around April to be protected before this season. However, there is no harm in vaccinating earlier than this month as the flu can be contracted at any time of the year. The UC Medical and Counselling Centre recommend receiving the flu vaccination as soon as they become available, to ensure protection as early as possible.

Where do I get the flu vaccine?

The UC Medical and Counselling Centre will be offering all current UC students an opportunity to receive a fully-funded flu vaccine.

Appointments can be made via HotDoc, by phone on 02 6201 2351, or by visiting the centre and speaking to our reception staff.

Dedicated Flu Vaccine Clinics

From April, keep an eye out for messaging about these clinics, or ask reception at the UC Medical and Counselling Centre.



HOW MUCH CAFFEINE IS TOO MUCH?

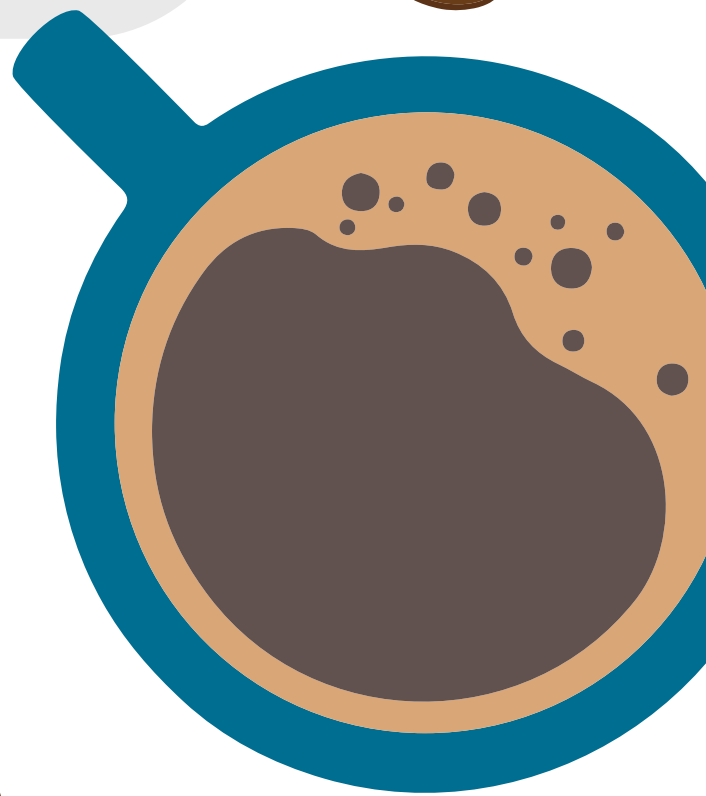
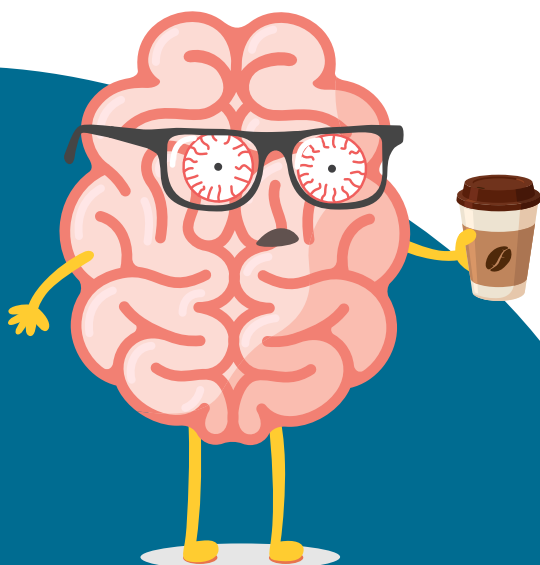
Managing classes, assignments, physical activity, social activities, and family life results in extremely busy days for university students. There is nothing like a caffeinated drink, or two, or three to keep you going throughout the day. Caffeine stimulates the brain and nervous system. When consumed, it can have effects such as increased mental alertness and physical energy that can last for hours.

Whilst this can enhance productivity when you may have started an assignment a bit too late, caffeine intake can begin to negatively affect your health rather than enhance it when consumption becomes excessive. Some symptoms of excessive consumption are:

- Dizziness
- Anxiety
- Headaches
- Sleeplessness
- Restlessness
- Caffeine dependency

SO, HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Your body's reaction to caffeine is dependent on individual height, weight, metabolism, and health. How regularly you consume caffeine will also affect your body's ability to process it.

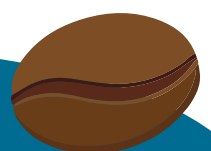


Research shows that an acceptable caffeine intake for the general population is **400mg per day**.

What does this look like for my beverage intake?

- **Instant coffee:** 80-120mg per 250ml
- **Espresso coffee:** 105-110 per 250ml
- **Drip or percolated coffee:** 150-240mg per 250ml
- **Black tea:** 65-105mg per 250ml
- **Energy drink:** 160mg per 250ml
- **Red Bull energy drink:** 80mg per 250ml

Be sensible with your caffeine intake to avoid excessive intake symptoms as listed above. This will ensure you stay focused and finish your assignments without inducing further anxiety!





FOOD IS FUEL



Focusing and retaining information whilst studying is difficult, and this process becomes even more difficult when our bodies are deprived of adequate nutrition. Ensuring you are consuming a wide variety of **all five food groups** is essential for your body to perform at its optimum academic ability.

Consuming each of these food groups will provide the body with essential vitamins and minerals, leaving you feeling energised and ready to learn during lectures and tutorials.

The *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* identifies the five food groups as stated below. Each group contains examples of what 1 serving might look like.

1

Vegetables and Legumes/Beans (at least 5 serves per day)

- 1/2 cup broccoli
- 1/2 medium potato
- 1/2 cup red kidney beans
- 1 medium tomato



2

Fruit (2 serves per day)

- 1 medium apple
- 1 medium banana
- 2 small kiwi fruits
- 1 cup diced fruit (no added sugar)



3

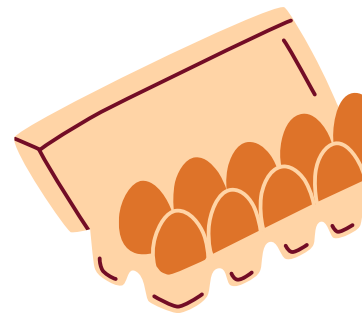
Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties (at least 4-6 serves)

- 1 slice bread
- 1/2 cup cooked rice/pasta
- 1/2 cup muesli
- 1 small English muffin

4

Lean Meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans (1-3 serves per day)

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup cooked lentils
- 65g cooked lamb/beef/pork
- 80g cooked chicken
- 30g nuts/seeds



5

Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat (2-3 serves per day)

- 1 cup milk
- 2 slices cheese
- 3/4 cup yoghurt
- 1 cup soy milk

(Serving suggestions are based off the general Australian adult population)



STUDENT HEALTH AT THE UC MEDICAL AND COUNSELLING CENTRE

The UC Medical and Counselling Centre is committed to ensuring student ensuring student physical and mental health remains a priority area throughout the year.

With a professional team of psychologists available from 9am–5pm Monday–Friday, Medical and Counselling is well equipped to assist any students requiring mental health support. Whether you are struggling with relationship breakups, workload, traumatic incidents or depression, our psychologists are here to help. Psychology services are confidential, FREE and available exclusively to all currently enrolled UC Student with no referral required.

As well as psychologists, the Medical and Counselling team is made up of:

- Medical Practitioners
- Visiting Psychiatrist
- Psychologists
- Registered Nurses

Appointments can be made by calling **02 6201 2351**, by booking through HotDoc, or visiting the centre and speaking to our reception staff.

Do you require more information about how to deal with specific mental or physical health concerns?

Click here to access specific resources from the Medical and Counselling Centre.

Emergency Contacts for mental health include:

- Lifeline Phone: **131 114**
- Mental Health Crisis Service Phone: **1800 629 354**
- University of Canberra 24-hour Crisis Line Phone: **1300 271 790** or Text: **0488 884 227**

24-hour contacts to keep in mind:

- **6201 2222**
UC Security
- **131 444**
Police assistance
- **1800 737 732**
National Sexual Assault Family and Domestic Violence Counselling Service
- **02 6280 0900**
Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- **02 5124 2185**
Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care
- **1300 224 636**
Beyond Blue
- **1300 78 99 78**
MensLine Australia
- **1800 184 527**
QLife
- **1800 629 354**
Access Mental Health

OTHER SUPPORTS

Citizen Centred Justice Clinic

Provides free legal advice on a variety of issues including:

- Housing
- Financial matters
- Addressing scams
- Dealing with domestic violence
- Handling divorce cases
- Addressing citizenship issues
- Managing employment situations within the community, such as addressing pay parity for international students.

Appointments are available every Wednesday and can be booked through the UC Medical and Counselling Centre: Building 1, Level B. Phone: 02 6201 2351.

Student Wellbeing and Support

Can assist with:

- Transition and first year support
- Accommodation and safe housing
- Financial Support
- Navigating Study

Contact: wellbeing@canberra.edu.au

International student support

Can assist with:

- Settling into life at UC and Canberra
- Programs that aim to enhance their study experience, health and wellbeing
- Understanding their student visa requirements and what is expected of them
- Tailored support for Australia Awards students
- Under-18 student welfare and accommodation needs
- Connections to other key services at UC and within the community
- Additional support for students

Contact: InternationalStudent@canberra.edu.au

UC Thrive and Student Mentor Program

Provides targeted and individualised peer-led support for commencing students through a scaffolded 8-week transition program.

Contact: ucthrive@canberra.edu.au

Multi-faith support

- Multi-faith and Chaplaincy

Contact: Chaplaincy@canberra.edu.au

Study Skills

Provides a range of face-to-face and only study help programs for UC students to assist with academic goals. These include:

- Drop in Study Help session
- Peer-Assisted Learning Sessions (PALS)
- The Maths and Stats Help Centre
- The ASK Advisors
- Study Skills English Language Support
- EndNote and Mahara support
- Referrals for Study Skills individual consultations etc.

Contact: studyskills@canberra.edu.au or by phone on 02 6201 2205.

For self-paced online resources and further information about Study Skills programs and services, visit the Study Help UCLearn (Canvas) site (log-in required).



TRAINING, COURSES AND GROUPS

BYSTANDER TRAINING

A free workshop on identifying safe and effective strategies to combat common bystander situations. Students will explore how challenging situations affect our perception and decision-making and offers techniques for taking clear action under pressure.

Contact Sam Smith to register: sam.smith@canberra.edu.au

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Join an early intervention training program on responding to someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. Led by a Licensed instructor, this is a practical skills-based program that equips people with the skills needed to face these situations with confidence.

Contact UC Medical and Counselling Centre on **02 6201 2351** for more information.

'ACT FOR ANXIETY' GROUP

A FREE, six-week group program informed by Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for students struggling with anxiety. This groups aims to provide you with skills and strategies to better manage your anxiety and to improve your day-to-day life.

Your psychologist may refer you to this group, and the UC Medical and Counselling Centre will contact you to join once this referral has been received.

THE WEEKLY PSYCH SESSION

This is a FREE weekly psych skill workshop for UC students. Run in person and online, learn a new set of skills and tools to improve your wellbeing and coping skills.

Register at: events.humanitix.com/weekly-psych-session

CITIZEN CENTRED JUSTICE CLINIC

If you have a problem with your employment, discrimination, workplace bullying, housing, immigration, family or custody matters, violence, sexual assault or other matters causing you concern, the UC Medical and Counselling Centre offers a free confidential legal service for UC students and staff on Wednesdays.

Book a face-to-face or telephone appointment through the UC Medical and Counselling Centre **02 6201 2351**

Keep an eye out for our next issue.

On behalf of the UC Medical & Counselling Centre, **stay safe everyone!**