



POTTY TALK

Brought to you by the Wellness Center

Survival Guide: Finals and Spring Break



We know finals can be a stressful time, especially when you are looking forward to the week of relaxation Spring Break brings! As you prepare for both, take a look at some important facts and helpful tips on how to take care of yourself while managing a stressful workload and while on Spring Break. And remember – whether you are staying close to home, crossing the border, or traveling abroad— **HAVE FUN—and BE SMART!!!**



“Study Drugs”

“Study Drugs” are prescription stimulants related to methamphetamines. All stimulants work by increasing dopamine levels in the brain. When prescribed by a physician, the doses start low and increase gradually until a therapeutic effect is reached. When taken without a prescription, the effect of that dose will be unknown. Physical consequences and side effects will also be experienced by one-time performance-enhancing use.

- When taken without a prescription for recreational or performance-enhancing purposes, stimulants can increase brain dopamine at a rapid and highly amplified manner, disrupting normal communication levels between brain cells and increasing risk of addiction.
- When taken in doses other than what is prescribed by a doctor, there is a rapid release of dopamine, which can cause addiction and the user to need more to receive the same effect in subsequent use.
- Common side effects include loss of appetite, headaches, nervousness, and trouble sleeping. Repeated use can lead to hostility and paranoia.
- If stimulants are used chronically, withdrawal symptoms including fatigue, depression, and disturbed sleep pattern may emerge, even when the drugs are discontinued.
- If someone gives or sells prescription stimulants to another person, the giver or seller of the prescription stimulants may be held responsible for consequences of such use (i.e. harm to others, medical complications).

Sources: www.drugdetox.org and www.nida.nih.gov

PARTY TIPS

If you choose to drink...

- ✓ Avoid pre-gaming—this is one of the biggest factors in alcohol poisoning.
- ✓ Know that alcohol is the #1 Predatory Drug – drugs that are used to incapacitate individuals for the purpose of committing crimes, often sexual assault.
- ✓ 90% of college-aged rapes and sexual assaults occur when combined with alcohol.
- ✓ Watch how much you drink and ALWAYS stay with people that you know and trust will WATCH OUT for you.
- ✓ Don't leave a beverage alone (even when you go to bathroom) and NEVER accept open drinks from strangers!
- ✓ ALWAYS stay with friends. Look out for each other and make “rules” and safety plans to protect yourself and each other.
- ✓ Set a LIMIT before you start drinking and stick to it! Avoid drinking games—really, you can pass!
- ✓ EAT before and while you are drinking.
- ✓ Space and PACE your drinks (your liver can only handle 1 per hour).

Spring Break Safety

- Call family or friends to let them know you've arrived and returned safely.
- Always carry your ID.
- Use the buddy system and always watch out for each other!
- Never allow members of your party to leave with strangers.
- Don't carry all of your credit cards or bank cards in your purse or wallet.
- Ask the hotel personnel about the neighborhood.
- Don't discuss personal information with strangers.
- Keep hotel room doors locked at all times.
- If using public transportation, avoid sitting near the door, and hold purses, backpacks, and other valuables close to your body.
- Observe the behavior of others around you and change seats or alert the driver if you feel uneasy.
- If a friend feels sick, do not leave him/her alone.

Taking Care of Yourself During Finals

- **Avoid caffeine.** Relying on and consuming too much caffeine can leave you restless, anxious and sleepless.
- **Avoid alcohol.** While alcohol causes drowsiness, it also contributes to insomnia. Alcohol disrupts normal sleep patterns, increasing fatigue the next day. Heavy alcohol use also interrupts abstract thinking for up to 30 days.
- **Use your bed for sleeping, not studying.** While bed may be a quiet place to study, you'll begin to associate bed with studying, which won't help you relax at night.
- **Take a nap.** Twenty-minute naps help to catch up on sleep, boost alertness and physical stamina.
- **Don't pull an all-nighter.** Studies show that students remember detailed course material better the next day if they get a good night's sleep rather than stay up all night trying to “cram” more information into their already-bursting brains.
- **Exercise Regularly.** Try to exercise 20-to-30 minutes a day. Daily exercise often helps people sleep and can improve mental functioning. For maximum benefit, exercise five-to-six hours before going to bed.
- **Don't Stress.** Prioritize and have realistic expectations. Anxiety leads to insomnia and students get the highest scores when they're not tired or hungry. Take care of your body, mind, and spirit to be at your best.

Adapted from UC San Diego Wellness Center: <http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/newsrel/general/12-08Sleep.asp>

Alcohol Overdose Alert

Signs of life-threatening levels of an overdose include:

- Slow or irregular breathing (less than 8 times/minute or more than 10 seconds between breaths)
- A weak pulse, or a very slow or very fast pulse
- Unconscious and difficult to awaken
- Cold and clammy skin that is pale or blue in color
- Vomiting, urinating, or defecating while unconscious/sleeping

If someone has any of these symptoms, s/he may be suffering from Acute Alcohol Poisoning – a life-threatening condition!

This is a medical emergency!

What to do:

- Call for emergency services (if you are at a hotel, immediately alert hotel staff to call for emergency medical help if you do not have the number)
- Do not leave the person alone
- Turn the person on his/her side, facing away from you, to prevent choking or suffocating in case of vomiting
- Try to keep the person awake and warm
- Stay with the person until medical help arrives

Remember: The Medical Amnesty and Good Samaritan Policy still applies if you are off campus.

For more information, visit www.scu.edu/medicalamnesty

Tips for Travel

Before you Travel

- Learn as much as you can about your destination before you travel
- Travel with someone that you know and trust
- Book your trip with a reputable travel agency
- Do not pack extremely valuable or cherished items

If you are Traveling Abroad

- If you are traveling abroad, keep in mind you are subject to the laws of the country you are visiting.
- Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport's information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.
- Put your name, address, and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage in covered luggage tags. If possible, lock your luggage.

Road trip

- Make sure everyone has their driver's license and the registration is in the car.
- Rotate drivers and make sure the person in the passenger's seat is ready to keep the driver alert.
- Make sure to lock car doors, roll up windows, and store personal items in the trunk.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html and <http://www.safespringbreak.org/safety-tips/>

“Potty Talk” is brought to you by the Wellness Center, located in the Malley Center. To learn more about the topics discussed here, please contact:

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<http://www.scu.edu/wellness>