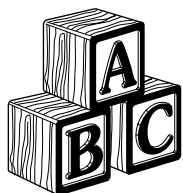


A Su Salud

To your health



Health ABC's

This month's issue is getting back to basics. Yes, we can discuss SARS, or the dioxins in farmed salmon, or even the pros and cons of the controversial Atkins diet. As important as those hot topics are, we've got to make room every once in a while for the

more run-of-the-mill topics. This month it's ABC: Acne, Bad Breath, and Caffeine.

A is for Acne

Here are the top five acne myths from the American Academy of Dermatology (www.aad.org).

Myth #1: Acne is caused by poor hygiene. If you believe this myth, and wash your skin hard and frequently, you can actually make your acne worse. Acne is not caused by dirt or surface skin oils. Although excess oils, dead skin and a day's accumulation of dust on the skin look unsightly, they should not be removed by hard scrubbing. Vigorous washing and scrubbing will actually irritate the skin and make acne worse. The best approach to hygiene and acne: Gently wash your face twice a day with a mild soap, pat dry—and use an appropriate acne treatment for the acne.

Myth #2: Acne is caused by diet. Extensive scientific studies have not found a connection between diet and acne. In other words, food does not cause acne. Not chocolate. Not french fries. Not pizza. Nonetheless, some people insist that certain foods affect their acne. In that case, avoid those foods. Nevertheless, eating a balanced diet always makes sense.

Myth #3: Acne is caused by stress. The ordinary stress of day-to-day living is not an important factor in acne. Severe stress that needs medical attention is sometimes treated with drugs that can cause acne as a side effect. If you think you may have acne related to a drug prescribed for stress or depression, you should consult your physician.

Myth #4: Acne is just a cosmetic disease. Yes, acne does affect the way people look and is not otherwise a serious threat to a person's physical health. However, acne can result in permanent physical scars—plus, acne itself as well as its scars can affect the way people feel about themselves to the point of affecting their lives.

Myth #5: You just have to let acne run its course. The truth is, acne can be cleared up. If the acne products you have tried haven't worked, consider seeing a dermatologist. With the

products available today, there is no reason why someone has to endure acne or get acne scars.

B is for Bad Breath

The American Dental Association (www.ada.org) has this to say about bad breath.

Whether you call it bad breath or halitosis, it's an unpleasant condition that's cause for embarrassment. Some people with bad breath aren't even aware there's a problem. If you're concerned about bad breath, see your dentist. He or she can help identify the cause and, if it's due to an oral condition, develop a treatment plan to help eliminate it.

What you eat affects the air you exhale. Certain foods, such as garlic and onions, contribute to objectionable breath odor. Once the food is absorbed into the bloodstream, it is transferred to the lungs, where it is expelled. Brushing, flossing and mouthwash will only mask the odor temporarily. Odors continue until the body eliminates the food. Dieters may develop unpleasant breath from infrequent eating.

If you don't brush and floss daily, **particles of food remain in the mouth**, collecting bacteria, which can cause bad breath. Food collects between the teeth, on the tongue and around the gums can rot, leaving an unpleasant odor.

Bad breath can also be caused by dry mouth (xerostomia), which occurs when the flow of saliva decreases. Saliva is necessary to cleanse the mouth and remove particles that may cause odor. Dry mouth may be caused by various medications, salivary gland problems or continuously breathing through the mouth. If you suffer from dry mouth, your dentist may prescribe an artificial saliva, or suggest using sugarless candy and increasing your fluid intake.

Tobacco products cause bad breath. If you use tobacco, ask your dentist for tips on kicking the habit. (*Or see Mary-Jo at De Anza Student Health Services!*)

Bad breath may be the sign of a medical disorder, such as a local infection in the respiratory tract, chronic sinusitis, postnasal drip, chronic bronchitis, diabetes, gastrointestinal disturbance, liver or kidney ailment. If your dentist determines that your mouth is healthy, you may be referred to your family doctor or a specialist to determine the cause of bad breath.

Maintaining good oral health is essential to reducing bad breath. Schedule regular dental visits for a professional cleaning and checkup. If you think you have constant bad breath, keep a log of the foods you eat and make a list of

medications you take. Some medications may play a role in creating mouth odors. Let your dentist know if you've had any surgery or illness since your last appointment.

Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste to remove food debris and plaque. Brush your tongue, too. **Once a day, use floss or an interdental cleaner** to clean between teeth.

Mouthwashes are generally cosmetic and do not have a long-lasting effect on bad breath. If you must constantly use a breath freshener to hide unpleasant mouth odor, see your dentist. If you need extra help in controlling plaque, your dentist may recommend using a special antimicrobial mouth rinse. A fluoride mouth rinse, used along with brushing and flossing, can help prevent tooth decay.

is for Caffeine

Caffeine is one of those substances we love to hate. This information is from The Vaults of Erowid (www.erowid.org).

What are the short-term effects of caffeine on the body?

The physiological effects of caffeine can begin as early as 15-45 minutes after ingestion. Its maximum central nervous system effects are reached in about 30-60 minutes. Caffeine increases heartbeat, respiration, basal metabolic rate, and the production of stomach acid and urine; and it relaxes smooth muscles, notably the bronchial muscle. All of these changes vary considerably among people and may depend upon the individual's sensitivity to this drug, his/her metabolism, or upon whether the consumer habitually uses or rarely uses caffeine. How long caffeine's effects last is influenced by the person's hormonal status, whether he/she smokes or takes medications, or has a disease that impairs liver functioning.

Subjectively, people report that caffeine gives them a "lift." They feel less drowsy, less fatigued, more capable of rapid and sustained intellectual effort. They also report improved performance of some manual tasks such as driving. However, caffeine may restore only those abilities or feelings the person had before fatigue or boredom set in. Studies have also shown that caffeine decreases reaction time to both visual and auditory stimuli; it does not significantly alter numerical reasoning (arithmetic skills) or short-term memory; and it can diminish performance of manual tasks that involve delicate muscular coordination and accurate timing.

What are the symptoms of caffeine overdose? Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system and can produce a variety of effects elsewhere in the body. The symptoms of a caffeine overdose ("caffeinism") will vary, according to individual differences and the amount consumed. Doses ranging from 250 to 750 mg (2 to 7 cups of coffee or tablets of NoDoz) can produce restlessness, dizziness, nausea, headache, tense muscles, sleep disturbances, and irregular heart beats. Doses of over 750 mg (7 cups of coffee) can produce all of the above as well as a reaction similar to an anxiety attack, including delirium, drowsiness, ringing ears, diarrhea, vomit-

ing, light flashes, difficulty breathing, convulsions (extreme overdose). These amounts of caffeine may come from a single dose or from multiple doses at short intervals. Besides caffeine's effects, the essential oils of coffee may cause gastrointestinal irritation and diarrhea, and the high tannin content of tea can result in constipation.

How does caffeine affect sleep? Studies of the effect of caffeine on sleep have shown that one strong cup of coffee, drunk 30-60 minutes before going to sleep, can cause restlessness and difficulty falling asleep, increased body movements, a tendency to be awakened more readily by sudden noises, and a decreased quality of sleep.

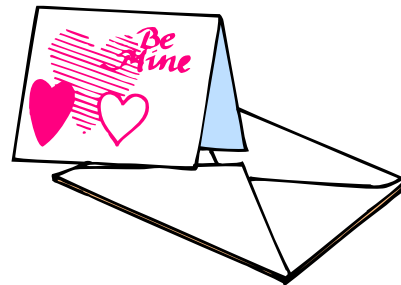
The wide variation in caffeine's effects on sleep may be related to whether the person is a habitual, heavy user or a non-user of caffeine. Non-users report greater difficulty with sleep after consuming caffeine. Heavy users may also experience sleep disturbances; however, their increased tolerance to the effects of caffeine affects their perceptions of disturbed sleep. Often they sleep for shorter periods of time, but have grown accustomed to this pattern.

If you use caffeine and are having trouble sleeping, you may want to try cutting back on your total daily intake or avoid consumption 5-7 hours before you plan on sleeping, to allow time for the caffeine to be metabolized.



is also for Condoms!

February 9-12 is National Condom Week. Health Services and the Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) invite you make Valentine cards for the special people in your life. Materials (including condoms) will be available at our lobby table beginning Monday, February 9.



De Anza College Health Services

is available to all registered De Anza students. Some of our services include:

Health education/TB skin tests/First Aid/Blood pressure checks/Condoms/lubricants/Over-the-counter medicine/
Pregnancy tests/Family planning

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