

Get the facts from the Health Education Program



By Britta Davis

Do you have questions about AIDS, contraception, alcohol, weight management, and fitness, but don't know where to go for answers? Reliable information is important. Getting bogus information about the number of fat grams in a bran muffin might not seem like such a big deal, but with some issues getting the wrong facts is a matter of life or death.

There are a number of myths out there about how to take care of yourself, some of which are not only unreliable but also dangerous. For instance, we all know that using a condom unequivocally means safe sex, right? WRONG! While using a condom generally means safer sex, some types of condoms, such as those made from sheep skin, offer virtually no protection from sexually transmitted diseases, including the AIDS virus. And how about lubricants? If you don't have lubricated condoms, Vaseline will work fine, right? Again—WRONG! While Vaseline might appear to do the trick, petroleum-based products like Vaseline break down the material most condoms are made of, causing tiny holes (invisible to the eye) to develop. The best of intentions won't protect you when the information you have is inaccurate.

So where do you go to get reliable



Photo by Joe Livingston

Sureish Nathan, Cholesterol Educator, and Melanie Brevoort, Peer Health Advisor, are among several Health Education Program staff members available to provide advice and information to students.

information? The good news is that there is a program right here on campus designed so students can talk to other students and get accurate information about their health-related concerns. It's called the Health Education Program and its office is located on the main floor of the Student Health Center at the corner of 13th and Agate. The Health Education Program has been around for a decade and has evolved to help reduce the health risks of university students.

The Health Education Program offers a variety of services to students for FREE! Peer Health Advising is one of the program's primary compo-

nents. Peer Health Advisors are students trained in health-related topics and in educating and advising other students about these topics. Peer Health Advisors provide individual counseling and group presentations on such topics as sexually transmitted diseases, vegetarianism, cholesterol-reduction, sexual assault, smoking cessation, weight management, and eating disorders, to name a few. If you are interested in talking with a Peer Health Advisor individually or in requesting a group presentation on a particular topic, call the Peer Health Education Office (346-4456) to set this up.

The Peer Health Advisors offer

various workshops, such as smoking cessation, low fat/low cost cooking, vegetarian eating, body image, and hikes in the local area. Watch for our information tables presenting health-related topics in the EMU throughout the year. You can also borrow a variety of health-related books, videos, and pamphlets at the Health Education Office.

What are the advantages to talking to another student instead of, or in addition to, talking to a professional? Talking to someone your own age who can relate to your experiences sometimes feels more comfortable than talking to a psychologist, doctor, or trainer. This is especially true when talking about sensitive issues like contraception, drug and alcohol use, eating problems, weight management, and so on.

In addition to the Peer Health Advisors, the Health Education Program employs both a nutrition counselor and a cholesterol-reduction counselor to provide free counseling for students. Free cholesterol screening is offered every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. If this is something you would like to do, you need to not eat anything from midnight the night before until your screening Tuesday morning. You should call the Health Education Office for more information.

The Peer Health Education Program has a lot to offer, stop by and check it out for yourself!

International student advisors offer support for culture shock



By Nick Jacob

When I came across from England last September, I was filled with optimism for what would surely be the best year of my life. I was not prepared for the harsh reality of cutting my ties with my friends back in London and winding up in a place where people communicated in a totally different way from what I was used to. I felt misunderstood, lonely and uncared for. In short, I was experiencing culture-shock.

All foreign students go through this experience on arriving in a new and 'strange' environment. The experience is a challenging, exciting and disturbing one. We are forced to examine and relate to a culture which has varying degrees of difference from our own, whilst having to speak a foreign language (or something which seems like a foreign language, even though you're using the same words) in order to communicate. Many foreign students feel unable to communicate their most subtle feelings to others in the English lan-

guage and find their host countries bewildering.

There are four international student advisors at the Office of International Education and Exchange (which is at Oregon Hall, on 13th and Agate) who are available to talk to anyone about their experiences and problems. I spoke to Ginny Stark, who is one of them. She said that culture-shock manifests itself in many different ways. Students feel lonely and inadequate when confronted with an entirely new education system. They may find it hard to read, write and concentrate, or feel sick, experience insomnia and stop eating properly. Ginny and the other international student advisors are there to provide strategies to deal with problems in order to achieve short-term goals and a feeling of success in managing and coping with bewildering changes. She sees her role as providing non-judgemental support for students experiencing many different kinds of difficulties in a new and strange environment.

A pilot program is also being run by International Peer Assistants to further back up the advisors this year. Its purpose is to help students adjust more fully to the University of Oregon during their important first year. These

assistants have been trained to provide the information and support new students need to negotiate their way through American academia. They have broad experiences and represent the different continents, so in most cases students will find someone who can speak their language. They have office hours Monday through Friday 12 noon-2pm.

The Counseling Center is to be found opposite Oregon Hall and is part of the Student Health Center. Two international groups run out of the center; the Asian American support group and The Students of Color support group, but any international students are welcome. There are counsellors of different races and nationalities; there are two African-American counselors, one German and one Japanese counsellor for instance. They will discuss problems and goals with you, ranging from lack of close friendship to lack of social life and difficult cultural differences.

Culture-shock and loneliness are normal experiences which you can do something about. Foreign students suffering from culture-shock should empower themselves by using the kinds of resources I have referred to above.

Pharmacy saves students money

Many students are unaware that they have access to the Student Health Center Pharmacy, and this is costing them money. Because the pharmacy is part of the Student Health Center, it often has much lower prices than other pharmacies. According to Heather Wilson, a pharmacist at the Student Health Center Pharmacy, the Pharmacy can help students save money on both prescription and over-the-counter medications.

In a sense, every student has already paid a substantial fee for the use of the pharmacy. Because the pharmacy is a part of the Student Health Center, its budget comes out of the \$60.00 per student per term student fee which funds the Health Center. However, even though the pharmacy is an integral part of the Student Health Center, students can have prescriptions filled from outside sources.

The pharmacy offers birth control products (pills are \$7/cycle), diabetic supplies (\$8.80 for human insulin), cold and flu supplies (generic Sudafed \$3 per 100, cough syrup at about \$2 per bottle), pain medication (Tylenol at \$2 per 50, Ibuprofen at \$4 per 100), and much more.

Although it appears small, it is a full service pharmacy. "If we don't have it, we can probably order it," said Wilson. But the most important reason students should use the pharmacy, said Wilson, is the friendly and informative staff. "We want people to know what they're doing," said Wilson.

The Pharmacy is inside the Student Health Center, close to the main entrance across from Oregon Hall. It is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm. On Tuesdays it opens an hour later and its hours are from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm. On Saturday the pharmacy is open from 8:00 am to noon. Their phone number is 346-4454.

LOOK INTO BOOKS

These and many other titles are available to be checked out at the Health Education Room across from the pharmacy in the Student Health Center.

- The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege
by Herb Goldberg, Ph. D.
- I Never Called It Rape
by Robin Warshaw
- The New American Diet
by William Connor, M. D. and Sonja Connor, M. S., R. D.
- When Food Is Love: Exploring the Relationship Between Food and Intimacy
by Genee Roth
- The Eight-Week Cholesterol Cure
by Robert E. Kowalski
- Body Love
by Rita Freedman
- The College Student's Health Guide
by Sandra Smith and Christopher Smith