



# HEALTH BEAT

CSULB Division of Student Services  
The Student Health Services, Health Resource Center

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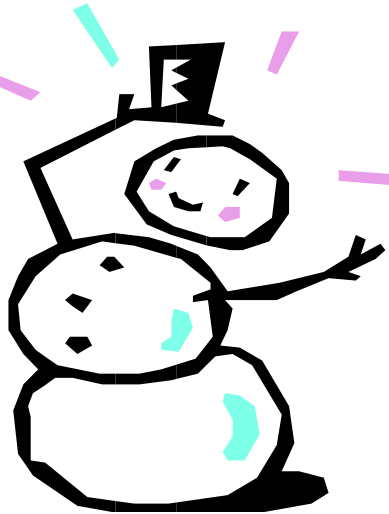
December

## Tips for Better Memory

Memory-(def.) n. Faculty of mentally retaining impressions of past experience, ability to remember.

Memory involves the ability to take in and store information and to retrieve that information for later use. Our memories help us retrieve information from a year ago or from just moments earlier. Imagine for a minute life without memory, waking up and having the ability to know what to do next. How would you take a shower, get dressed, tie your shoes, make breakfast, and find the way to school? In everyday life, memory is important and human beings could not survive without it. Sometimes we have difficulty keeping all classroom material in our minds. What is the process that we

actually can use to retain the pertinent information our instructors say? There are means by which we can keep our instructors' "pearls of wisdom"



tucked safely in our memories.

Here are some of the techniques that can help one retain vital information:

### Jared Kisner

1. **Increase Attention.** It is impossible to remember information if one did not pay attention in the first place. Be sure your memory problems are not really attention problems.
2. **Promote External Memory.** Many things that need to be remembered can be written down, a practice known as "external memory." Practices such as keeping an assignment notebook and maintaining a student calendar can be helpful in remembering to do things. Unfortunately, external memory is usually of little use (ethically speaking) on tests.
3. **Enhance Meaningfulness.** Find ways to relate the content being discussed to prior knowledge. Draw parallels to facts about your own life.

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### Special Points of Interest

- Student Health Services will be closed from December 24 until January 3, 2005. We are open during the Winter Session with our normal business hours.

*Monday 8-6*

*Tuesday 8-6*

*Wednesday 10-7*

*Thursday 8-6*

*Friday 8-12*

- Sexual Health Awareness Workshop has ended for Fall 2004 and will restart in the Spring 2005 semester.
- Check our website for updates regarding HIV & STD Testing & Counseling.
- Nutrition Counseling end the week before finals and restarts in February 2005.
- For more information about our programs and services, see our website:

[www.csulb.edu/hrc](http://www.csulb.edu/hrc)

## Alleviate and Prevent Colds and Flu

### Kelly Cárdenas

Beware, the cold and flu season is here and we do not want to miss important classes, especially during finals week. The cold and flu differ in severity, but do share some very similar symptoms. Usually a cold is milder,

whereas the flu is more severe. A cold usually presents itself with feelings of tiredness, sneezing, coughing, runny nose, muscle aches, scratchy throat, watery eyes, and a headache. One may also experience a low-grade fever of 1 or 2 degrees

higher than usual or may not have a fever at all. However, the flu usually begins suddenly and hits hard. With the flu, one may have symptoms of feeling weak, tired,

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## Colds and Flu

feverish, dry cough, runny nose, chills, muscle aches, severe headache, eye pain, and a sore throat. Viruses cause the flu and cold. There are over 100 different viruses that can cause a cold. While only a few viruses can cause the flu, thus the reason why there is a shot for the flu and not for colds.<sup>1,2</sup>

If it is impossible to receive a flu shot, there are ways in which to help suppress the symptoms if one contracts a virus. Drinking plenty of fluids, such as water, fruit juices, and clear soups helps loosen mucus. Fluids are significant to combating a fever because a fever dries the body's fluids that can lead to dehydration. Even though no medicine can cure the cold or flu, over-the-counter medications can alleviate some of the symptoms. Some of the medications commonly used are...

- Analgesics: relieve aches, pains, and reduce fever. Examples are acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, ketoprofen, and naproxen.
- Antihistamines: stop runny nose, itchy watery eyes, and sneezing.



**You can suppress cold symptoms with a variety of over the counter drugs**

Examples are diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine, and clemastine.

- Antitussives: cough suppressants. An example is dextromethorphan.
- Expectorants: help thin out and loosen mucus in order to cough it up more easily. An example is guaifenesin.
- Decongestant: unclogs stuffy nose. An examples is pseudoephedrine.<sup>2</sup>

There are various preventative measures that can be taken in order to avoid a cold and flu. One of these measures is to cover our mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing so infected droplets are not spread. This is important because the primary means by which the cold and flu are spread is from person to person through droplets from coughs and sneezes. These particles are able to move through the air that we breathe, therefore making us susceptible to acquiring the illness. Touching unclean surfaces, such as desks, doorknobs or handrails that have respiratory droplets can also spread germs. Therefore, it is recommendable that we do not touch our mouth, eyes or nose because germs can easily enter through these paths. Even if one has contact with unclean surfaces, washing

## Continued from page 1

hands often with soap and warm water for about 15 to 20 seconds may prevent getting sick. When soap and water are unavailable, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. These waterless sanitizers can be found in supermarkets and drug-stores.<sup>3,4</sup>

### References:

1. Nordenberg, T. (1999). Colds and Flu: Time Only Sure Cure. [http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/896\\_flu.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/896_flu.html) Retrieved on 10/27/04.
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## Make It a Great Party

The holidays are a time to enjoy the company of family and friends. If you're hosting a party, don't forget these simple tips to help make sure it's a safe, fun and memorable time for everyone.



Spacing drinks during a party can help your friends stay within their limits

**1. When serving alcoholic beverages, serve food.**

Provide guests with nutritious and appealing foods like cheese and meats to slow the effects of alcohol. Avoid salty foods that encourage people to drink more.

**2. Offer non-alcoholic beverages.**

Be sure to offer a variety of drinks for everyone such as soft drinks, coffee and water.

## Jennifer Layno

**3. Serve each guest one drink at a time.**

Spacing drinks during a party can help your friends stay within their personal limits.

**4. Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends.**

Serve desserts and other foods, coffee and soft drinks.

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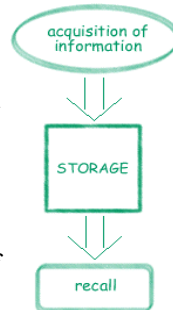
## Memory

4. **Use Pictures.** Pictures can provide a memory advantage. Pay close attention to pictures on the chalkboard or on the overhead projector. If pictures are simply unavailable, create images, or "pictures in your head."
5. **Minimize Interference.** Avoid digressions and emphasize only the critical features of a new topic. Look for examples that relate directly to the content being covered.
6. **Promote Active Manipulation.** One remembers better if actively thinking through new information, rather than simply repeating it. For example, rather than simply telling yourself that penguins carry their eggs on the tops of their feet, ask why it makes sense that penguins would carry their eggs on the tops of their feet?
7. **Increase Your Amount of Practice.** One remembers information better through the practice of using it more frequently.
8. **Don't use drugs or drink alcohol.** Researchers at Duke Univer-

sity and the Durham VA Medical Center conducted the first human study to assess the effects of alcohol on memory in young adults. The study found that just two drinks before attempting to retain knowledge could dampen the ability of college-age students to learn and remember new information.

There is no specific part of the brain that deals with memory. Memory involves a number of different areas working together. The Temporal Lobe is the region of the brain associated with storage and consolidation of past events. The Diencephalons role is not clear, but may enable context to be incorporated into memory. The Frontal Lobes act as our 'executive' or management center, this area is also thought to play a part in memory. In summary, the Temporal Lobe acquires the information, the Diencephalons store memory and the Frontal Lobe allows us to recall memories.

Now that you have the knowledge of how information is stored, how to keep your



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mind exercised and alert, and how to retain important facts for your next exam, go and take full advantage of all your memory gas to offer!

### References:

1. Memory Matters, (n.d.) Retrieved October 27, 2004, from [http://kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/brain/memory.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/memory.html)
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4. What is Memory, (n.d.) Retrieved October 28, 2004, from <http://memory.kingshill-research.org/memory/>
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## Make It a Great Party

But remember, none of these tips eliminate alcohol from the body...only time can accomplish this process.

5. **Help your guests get home safely.** Encourage your guests to designate a sober driver. If necessary, call a cab or ask your guest to spend the night.

Try a non-alcoholic cocktail like the one below:

**South Sea Cooler**  
 3 oz. Orange juice  
 1/2 oz. Undiluted grapefruit juice  
 1 oz. Coconut cream  
 1 oz. Light cream  
 Add ice and serve in a tall glass.



*Have a safe and happy holiday!*



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# Improving Concentration: What Really Works?

## Renee Galas

As the semester progresses, many students may have noticed that their concentration level consequently lowers. Some of the popular measures that students use to heighten their concentration are using caffeine or herbal supplements, such as Ginkgo Biloba. These are supplements to improve concentration, but they cannot fully restore it. The partial restoration and harmful consequences of these supplements can be avoided by improved sleeping habits. Insufficient sleep has been shown to have a negative impact on concentration and has been correlated to poor grades.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, students often encounter situations in which sleep must be sacrificed for a satisfactory grade. These situations invite the use of stimulants. Caffeine is a FDA-approved stimulant for improving psychomotor performance. Note that while psychomotor improvement may help the performance of manual tasks or simple mental processes, it has not been proven to aid in the development of abstract thinking or complex intellectual ideas. Therefore, caffeine is ideal for those emergency situations like cramming for an exam, but regular use does not allow in depth concentration. Along with caffeine's inability to restore full concentration, it may also cause sleep disturbances. Quality sleep should not be replaced by caffeine, as sleep yields more effective concentration. Caffeine also has other adverse effects, such as anxiety, restlessness, tremors, headache, gastric irritation, and nausea.<sup>1</sup>

Another popular method of

improving concentration is the herbal supplement Ginkgo Biloba. The leaves from this ancient tree have been known to cure a variety of ailments, cognitive function being one of them. Evidence shows that Ginkgo Biloba modestly improves some measures of cognitive function, including short-term visual memory and speed of cognitive processing. Such benefits have been observed in patients with age-related memory impairment. While the herb has been proven to have moderate effect on concentration it seems to be most useful for people age 30-59. If one decides to use this supplement, lower doses of 120mg per day are recommended as they have the same effectiveness as the higher doses. Ginkgo Biloba may be self-prescribed for persistent difficulty with concentration but stopping the problem at its source may be more effective.<sup>2</sup>

One possible source of decreased concentration is insufficient sleep. Improving sleep may help to prevent low concentration. In order for sleep to be a preventative of poor concentration, it must be continuous throughout the night as well as fulfill the recommended seven to nine hours of duration.<sup>3</sup> The brain goes through cycles of four energy stages as we sleep and requires about eight hours to make a full rotation of cycles. If one's sleep is disturbed during the night, the cycle is interrupted as well. When returning to sleep after disruption, the cycle must start over from the beginning. Breaking the cycle may prevent reaching the most restorative energy level. Restoration level through continuous sleep pro-

motes mental alertness, which allows a person to concentrate at their maximum potential.

Good sleeping habits can be difficult to accomplish with the pressure of deadlines and exams but finding ways to relax can improve one's quality of sleep and concentration. Finding ways to relax can help lull you to sleep, ensuring alertness the following day. Some effective ways to relax are regular exercise, hot baths or showers, meditation, prayer, music, or reading. Keeping a "worry book" at your desk and by your bedside is helpful in storing your thoughts for another time. By putting aside internal distractions on paper, it is easier to focus on the task at hand.<sup>4</sup>

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