

HEALTH BEAT

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Sexual Health Awareness Workshop (SHAW)

Wednesdays: 1:30-3:30

Thursdays: 3:30-5:30

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Same Day Results!

Mondays: 10:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:00

Tuesdays: 10:00-12:00 & 2:00-4:00

Wednesdays: 3:00-4:00

Thursdays: 9:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:00

For an appointment, call the HRC!

562-985-4609

A Health Service for All Seasons

By Linda Peña

Whether it is summer, fall, winter or spring, California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) Student



Health Services (SHS) “provides medical services, preventive health, and educational programs to registered students.”¹ The SHS provides care for students who are suffering from symptoms related to the common cold and/or flu, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and physical injuries, such as sprains and fractures. Also, students can develop stress as a result of meeting university responsibilities and requirements. Stress can overturn an individual’s health balance. No matter the symptom or its causal factor, make an appointment by calling (562) 985-2727 and visit the SHS for your health care solutions.

Automatically taken from tuition is an SHS fee that covers the cost of many medical services offered. And for some procedures that might incur further cost beyond the automatic tuition fee, such as immunizations, pharmaceuticals, and lab fees, the SHS provides them at greatly reduced prices when compared to similar services offered at off-campus medical facilities. By supplying cost-effective services, it is hoped that a student’s stress level is lessened because they are guaranteed good health care that is affordable.

One such additional cost that students should consider mandatory is for immunization against meningitis or meningococcal disease, also referred to as spinal meningitis. There are two forms of meningitis, viral and bacterial.² The viral form is less severe, but the bacterial is serious and can cause brain damage and/or death.² These bacteria are spread through the air and students become especially vulnerable if living in close proximity to others as in the residence halls. Therefore, the CSULB residency program requires all students to show proof of immunization before moving into their rooms.²

Two contributing factors to good health are diet and sleep. For those students interested in changing and/or evaluating their dietary intake for better health, free individual nutrition counseling is offered through the Health Resource Center (HRC). However, these sessions are limited to only the fall and spring semesters. During these semesters, please call (562) 985-4609 to make an appointment. And no matter what time of the year, students always require an adequate amount of sleep in order to prevent their academic performance, health, and even their social life from suffering. In every survey by the American College Health Association since 2000, students from across the country have consistently ranked sleep difficulties as the third most common impediment to academic performance.³

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Sexy Safeguards: Protect Against HPV

By: Christina Goldpaint



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The Sexual Health Awareness Workshop (SHAW) presents guidelines for all students to ensure they can be sexy, while simultaneously maintaining good health. SHAW is a free workshop offered twice a week at the Health Resource Center (HRC); individual consultations are also available for students who cannot attend the regularly scheduled workshops. During the workshop, a wide range of sexual health topics are covered, including birth control methods, sexually transmitted infection (STI) facts, breast and testicular self-exam techniques, partner communication, and an explanation of the gynecological exam and Pap test.

Currently, one topic of critical importance to all college stu-

dents is human papilloma virus (HPV). This is an extremely common virus with over 100 strains, 30 of which are sexually transmitted. Sexually transmitted HPV is so common, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that 50% of sexually active individuals are already infected, and that 80% of women will become infected by age 50.¹

HPV is transmitted through direct genital-to-genital or oral-to-genital contact with an infected partner; penetration such as vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse does not need to occur to transmit HPV.² Unlike other STIs such as HIV and chlamydia, which are spread through infected bodily fluids, HPV is transmitted through direct skin-to-skin

contact. When used correctly and consistently, condoms are highly effective at reducing the risk of HPV infection; however, condoms do not cover some areas of the genitals, so they cannot guarantee 100% protection.²

Sexually transmitted strains of HPV can be divided into two categories: low-risk and high-risk. Low-risk strains of HPV can cause mucosal warts, which are warts that are in moist parts of the body, such as the genital and/or anal regions. Through oral sex, mucosal warts can also be spread to the mouth, throat, or even the eyes. Every strain of HPV is numbered; the two most common subtypes of low-risk HPV are 6 and 11, which together account for 90% of

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The Basics of HIV

By Heidi Burkey

“Why should I care? I won’t get HIV. That only happens to people who use needles for drugs.” These are common statements heard in the CSULB Student Health Center. Unfortunately, young people do get infected with HIV, even those who don’t use needles. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that is passed to other people through:

- Unprotected sex: vaginal, anal, or oral
- Sharing needles
- Exposure to infected blood
- From an infected mother to her baby

In order to get infected, you have to be exposed to certain body fluids:

- Blood
- Semen (including pre-ejaculate)
- Vaginal secretions
- Breast milk

Once a person is infected with HIV, the virus replicates inside of immune system cells and destroys

them. As HIV multiplies and kills immune system cells, the immune system weakens and can no longer fight off infections. When a person is diagnosed with certain opportunistic infections, such as Kaposi’s Sarcoma, or a specific pneumonia, and their immune system cell count is very low (less than 200), they have transitioned into Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The time span between being infected with HIV and it becoming AIDS varies for each person. Some people may live with HIV for many years and others may go into an AIDS diagnosis sooner.¹

Because many young people do not perceive they are at risk for HIV, or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), they often do not protect themselves. Alcohol and drug use before sex, lack of communication between sexual partners, and already having an STI are factors that increase one’s risk of infection. Im-

portant strategies for protecting oneself from HIV infection are learning communication and sex negotiation skills, and always using condoms and water-based lubricants with every sex partner.

HIV testing does not protect a person from getting HIV; but only diagnoses someone as HIV positive or negative. If positive, the infected student begins proper medical care, and if deemed necessary, will begin anti-retroviral medications to help strengthen the immune system. These daily medications are expensive and cause numerous side effects. However, there are government programs that will pay for these medications if one is considered low income.^{1,2} Many HIV positive people live long and productive lives by taking medications, maintaining a well-balanced diet, incorporating physical activity and practicing safer sex with their partner.

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Not only does the SHS provide excellent medical care for the students, housed within the facilities are the Health Resource Center (HRC) and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Program. Both stress positive interaction with students through health education classroom presentations, on-campus outreach programs and prevention and harm reduction health strategies. Always remember, no matter the season, the CSULB Student Health Services is on campus to serve a student's individual health needs.

1. California State University Long Beach. Student Health Services. *Student Services Division Home*. Available at: <http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students/shs/>. Accessed June 2, 2008.
2. Center for Disease Control. Frequently asked questions. *Meningococcal Disease*. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/bacterial/faqs.htm>. Accessed June 2, 2008.
3. University of Southern California. Health sciences campus & USC school of dentistry. *USC American College Health Association National College Health Assessment Report*. 2006: 1-26. ■



Are Prescription Drugs Harmful?

By: Ralph Davis

"It's safe...it's only taking medicine." This phrase is used by many students who are self-medicating with prescription drugs (pills) to get a *buzz*. Four out of 10 teens think that prescription medicines are safer to abuse than illicit drugs, even if not prescribed by a doctor.¹ In spite of nationwide casualties from taking pills in this manner, university students minimize the potential risks for using prescription drugs. Since these medications are found in household medicine cabinets, they are abused by a variety of people. According to a 2004 study, about 1 in 5 teenagers abused a prescription painkiller to get high.²

Three types of prescription drugs or pills used for recreational purposes are narcotic pain relievers, depressants and stimulants.² The most commonly used drugs are: Vicodin® and Oxycontin®, narcotic pain relievers; Valium® and Xanax®, depressants that slow down brain activity, used to treat anxiety, sleep disorders or panic attacks; Ritalin® and Dexedrine®, stimulants that speed up brain activity to alleviate the symptoms of sleep disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and depression.² While these drugs have medicinal value for people experiencing health, mental and emotional symptoms, they pose risks when used without medical supervision and are frighteningly dangerous if mixed with other medications (i.e. allergy or asthma meds) or alcohol. If used improperly, Vicodin® or Oxycontin® can cause serious consequences such as: slowed breathing, confusion, pass-

ing out, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, seizures, and in rare instances, even death as evidenced by Heath Ledger's fatal overdose.³

Another potential risk of taking prescription drugs is addiction. The more these drugs are used, the more your body craves this *buzz*. Vicodin® or Oxycontin® are synthetic opiates (manmade derivatives of opium) and are similar to the street drug, heroin. Highly addictive, opiates cause many physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms including: bone and muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes, and insomnia.³

Although prescription drugs are safe when taken as medically directed to treat a specific condition, it must be stressed that they pose a threat to all who use them without their doctor's knowledge. Because of age, most university students view themselves as invincible. However, no matter our age, internally we are vulnerable. Do not risk your health by abusing safe drugs.

1. Office of National Drug Control Policy. *Prescription for Danger*. Washington D.C.: Executive Office of the President; January 2008; 1-11.
2. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. A prescription for danger-use of painkillers on the rise. *Family guide: Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy & Drug Free*. Available at <http://family.samhsa.gov/talk/painkillers.aspx>. Accessed June 19, 2008.
3. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Misuse of prescription pain relievers: The buzz takes your breath away. Permanently. *Center for Drug Evaluation and Research*. Available at http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/buzz_brochure.htm. Accessed June 19, 2008. ■

Sexy Safeguards Continued...

genital wart infections in the U.S. High-risk strains of HPV can cause cell changes which can eventually lead to cancer if left undiagnosed or untreated.¹

High-risk strains of HPV can cause cancers of the cervix, vulva, vagina, anus, or penis. HPV subtypes 16 and 18 cause over 70% of cervical cancers in the U.S.¹ HPV can also be transmitted through oral sex; high-risk HPV can cause oropharyngeal cancers, which are cancers of the mouth and throat. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in May 2007 found that HPV subtype 16 was found in 72% of 100 oropharyngeal cancers sampled.³ The study also found that in a review of more than 5,000 cases of head and neck squamous-cell cancers, HPV type 16 accounted for 86.7% of cases of oropharyngeal squamous-cell carcinoma, 68.2% of oral squamous-cell carcinoma, and 69.2% of laryngeal squamous-cell carcinoma. According to the study, a high number of lifetime oral sex partners were associated with oropharyngeal cancer.³

The Basics of HIV Continued...

The CSULB Student Health Services offers free, rapid HIV testing and counseling appointments Monday through Thursday. Rapid HIV testing is done with an oral swab and results are ready within 20 minutes. In the 30 minutes testing and counseling session, a student meets with a counselor who swabs their gums for the sample. While the swab is analyzed, the counselor and student discuss any concerns regarding HIV risks and develop a risk-reduction plan for the future. Students discover their own personal HIV risks and how to prevent being infected in the future. For students testing HIV positive (called a preliminary positive), a laboratory blood sample is taken for confirmation. The student returns several days later to meet with the counselor for the confirmatory results and to determine the next steps for receiving medical care and support. The Long Beach

In 2006, the HPV vaccine Gardasil™ was approved by the FDA for use in females 9-26 years of age. The vaccine protects against the four most common subtypes of HPV: 6, 11, 16, and 18 if no previous infection has occurred; the vaccine will not treat HPV infection. Gardasil™ is not a substitute for routine Pap testing, and HPV infection can still occur from other strains not covered by the vaccine.¹ However, by using sexy health practices such as being vaccinated with Gardasil™ and always using condoms for all sex acts, with all sex partners, students can better enjoy sexual intimacy with others.

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Genital HPV*. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/stdHPV/hpv-fact-sheet.pdf>. Accessed June 10, 2008.
2. American Social Health Association. *Fact sheet on HPV*. Available at http://www.ashastd.org/pdfs/HOPV_factsheet.pdf. Accessed June 10, 2008.
3. Syrjänen, S. (2007). Human papillomaviruses in head and neck carcinomas. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2007; 356: 1993-1995. ■

Department of Health & Human Services' counselors guide and direct the student through health insurance issues, obtaining proper medical care, and seeking emotional support. Also critically important is the student's understanding of their disease, how to prevent infecting sex partners and telling past and current partners they must be HIV tested. There are special counselors who help with this process.

If you have any of the above listed risks for HIV, make an appointment for testing. It is free, confidential and you will get your results in 20 minutes!

1. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2006). *HIV/AIDS among youth*. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/youth.htm>. Accessed June 9 2008.
2. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2008). *Basic HIV/AIDS Information*. Available at <http://www.aids.gov/basic/index.html>. Accessed June 9, 2008. ■

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