



Say Ah! Campus™

A Health Literacy Initiative for College Students

Use these quick tips from **Say Ah! Campus™** to help you get good health care on - and off - campus.

Know Your Rights

Start by knowing your rights, including your right to privacy and confidentiality. Learn more at: <http://say-ah.org/say-ah-campus-about/rights>.

Make a Health Document File

Keep all your important health documents together, and in both a paper and digital file. Include:

- Your health insurance identification card;
- An up-to-date personal health record with vaccinations you've received and when, major health events (such as broken bones, surgeries, major illnesses), allergies, and chronic diseases; and
A list of all the medications you are currently taking (prescription, over-the-counter, herbs and supplements), and include:
 - The date you made the list
 - The name of what you are taking
 - Why you are taking it, and when you started taking it
 - How much and dosage
 - How often
 - When and how
 - The doctor who prescribed the medication(s) and his/her contact info

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College Health: The Basics

Insurance: Find out what your health insurance covers, including lab and pharmacy.

- If you don't have insurance, find out about campus health plans, how many credits you have to carry to qualify and about cost
- Find out if the campus health center offers any any free services

Get to know the Health Center: Find out where it is, what services they offer, and what hours they are open. Keep the contact info in your phone, and make sure your parents/guardians have it, too.

Make sure the Health Center knows you:

Introduce yourself to the staff, and make sure it has your up-to-date health records. This is especially important for anyone managing an on-going health issue, such as diabetes, asthma, or anxiety.

Know When to Get Help

Know when to go to a doctor and when it's an emergency: Talk to your doctor about when you should seek care. Many colleges offer information on when to go to the health center and when to go to a hospital. Always call 9-1-1 in an emergency.

What to Do When You Get Care

Talking with your doctor (or other health care provider such as a nurse practitioner): You should feel comfortable talking with your doctor, even about very personal issues. If you can't, find another doctor — or ask to see a different one if you are using the campus health center.

- Give honest, complete and accurate information
- Explain what is wrong. You've come to the doctor to get a diagnosis not give one, so tell the story of what is wrong or what happened. For example, "Yesterday, I fell and bruised my elbow. Today it is swollen."

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- Speak up if something doesn't feel right or isn't
 - Tell your doctor when you don't understand a word or concept
 - Take notes so you can remember important information and instructions
 - Bring someone with you to help out and provide support
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Medications

We can't stress enough how important it is to learn about your medications so you can use them safely and effectively.

Always ask these questions about your medications:

- What is the name of the medication?
- What is it for?
- What will it do?
- Is this medication the only way to treat my illness, and if not what are my other choices?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the risks?
- What are the side effects?
- How soon will I feel the effects of the medication?
- How can I expect to feel when I first start taking it?
- What should I do if I have a problem with it?
- Will it interact with any of my other medications?
- How long should I take it, and will I need a refill?
- How do I take it (i.e. with food)?
- What if I miss a dose?
- Are there things I should avoid while taking it (sunshine, milk, grapefruit)?

BONUS TIP: Everything you put into your body impacts your health and health care. If you drink alcohol or use illegal drugs, include it on your medication list. If you don't want it writing, then make sure to talk to your doctor -- s/he needs this information to diagnose and treat you. Remember, you have a right to privacy and confidentiality. So help your doctor help you by being honest!

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How to Follow Up

Health care doesn't end when your doctor's appointment does. Call your doctor if you have any questions or concerns, especially if:

- You don't understand or remember your doctor's instructions
- You start to feel worse
- You have *any* problem with your medicine, you've stopped taking it, or can't afford it
- You haven't gotten your results back from a test

If it is an emergency call 911.

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