

SHS offers health tips to students

Editor's note: Starting today and continuing in the fall, The Daily Tar Heel will periodically run a column answering health-related questions. Questions to be considered for the column should be addressed to the Student Health Service and dropped off at the Health Education Suite of the SHS or the DTH office.

health

Q. With exams coming up, I'm going to be drinking a lot of coffee. Is a lot of caffeine bad for you?

SHS: The main action of caffeine is to produce a more rapid and clearer flow of thought and to allay drowsiness and fatigue. After taking caffeine, a person is capable of a greater sustained intellectual effort and a more perfect association of ideas. But like many things, it only works up to a certain point.

There is no evidence that a moderate coffee habit is harmful to the average person. But excessive consumption of coffee or tea may lead to chronic caffeine poisoning. Symptoms include restlessness, disturbed sleep, heart palpitations, stomach irritations and diarrhea; these can be seen after drinking seven to 10 cups of brewed coffee in rapid succession.

Since caffeine is a mildly addicting drug, abrupt withdrawal from it by people who ordinarily consume substantial amounts can lead to a headache or depression for several days.

The amounts of caffeine differ with each type of drink: nondecaffeinated instant coffee, 60 mg per cup; ground roasted, 134 mg per cup; tea, 50 mg per cup; Coke and Pepsi, 20 mg per 8 oz. glass.

Therefore, using caffeine to increase your concentration through exams is not harmful if it is in moderation.

Q. My roommate has started to take vitamins because she claims that they give her more energy. Is there any reason to take vitamins and, if so, what kind and how many?

SHS: First of all, vitamins do not provide energy unless the person taking them has a severe vitamin or mineral deficiency,

resulting in extreme fatigue and anemia, an unlikely possibility for your roommate.

Too often vitamins are taken as an excuse for poor eating habits or as a "cure" for any variety of ailments. The fact is that most people would not have to take vitamins if they maintained a good diet.

Furthermore, when taking vitamins, it is difficult to differentiate between the psychological benefits of taking the pills and the psychological benefits that result from the vitamin itself. If you feel a great need for a vitamin supplement because you are not sure whether you have an adequate diet, shop around and avoid the high prices of "natural" and "organic" vitamins.

Look for store brands that have the same amounts of each vitamin as the basic national brands; the savings are usually substantial. But the main thing to remember is that vitamins should serve as a supplement to a well-balanced diet, which provides the majority of nutrients that your body needs.

Q. I have just started jogging and I am beginning to develop some sore joints and muscles. What should I do to prevent this problem?

SHS: Whenever beginning a running or jogging program, the most important thing to remember is not to strain your body. If the body is subject to continuous stress, cumulative fatigue may result. There are several signs of this fatigue: pain in the joints, muscles or tendons; trouble falling asleep or staying asleep; continual thirst, resulting from dehydration. According to Sports Medicine physician Joe DeWalt, not being able to carry on a conversation while jogging is a sign of overdoing it.

It is a good idea to run short distances when you first start jogging. Wearing good shoes is also important; buy shoes that are properly padded to absorb shocks and that have a wide, stable heel to prevent sway that wears on leg muscles.

Taking time to warm up before running can prevent many injuries. A series of stretching exercises will help you to avoid pulled muscles.

Vidal seeks origin of creation in novel

By WILLIAM PESCHEL
Staff Writer

To search for the origin of creation, Gore Vidal could not have chosen a better era than the fifth century B.C. He covers three civilizations in *Creation*, during which Darius I of Persia ruled from the Nile to the Indus. Socrates and Aristotle lived in Greece. Zoroaster, Nebuchadnezzar and Lao-Tzu had recently died. In India, the Buddha was alive, as was Confucius in China. They all figure in *Creation*, his 17th novel.

The story begins as Cyrus Spitama, a half-Persian, half-Greek grandson of the prophet Zoroaster—now totally blind and dying in

exile from Persia—dictates his memoirs of his career as ambassador to India and Cathay (China). His belief in the dual theory of creation—an inevitable battle between good and evil—is at odds with the civilizations he visits, making him a good foil for the arguments throughout this 510-page book.

As in his previous novels, Vidal injects much mood and color in *Creation*. On a visit to Babylon, Spitama describes a ziggurat: "Seven enormous cubes of brick have been set one atop the other. A staircase goes around the whole pyramidal shape. Since each level is sacred to a different divinity, each is colored accordingly. Even by moonlight we could make out the ghostly

shining blues and reds and greens of the various sun and moon and star gods."

Spitama's travel, like his sex, is very much telescoped. Moving from Persia to Cathay across the Himalayas takes less than a page. And on his wedding night, after marrying an Indian princess he says, "That night our marriage was agreeably consummated. I was pleased. She was pleased. Presumably, the Vedic gods were pleased, for nine months later my first son was born."

It is difficult to convey the scope of this novel. In between discussions on creation, Spitama discourses on Greeks (who are pompous bores to him), his blindness, his boyhood friendship with Xerxes, future King of Kings and other subjects.

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by Garry Trudeau



Incoming freshmen

Additional achievement sought

By MARK SCHOEN
Staff Writer

A target-number of 3,200 high school graduates will be admitted to The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this fall, Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions Margaret Folger said Tuesday.

Of those students, an estimated 2,700 will be from North Carolina. No more than 15 percent of the freshmen admitted may be from out of state, she said.

Although a prospective applicant may excel in academics, the UNC admissions office looks for additional achievements before admitting the student, Folger said.

"The high school record is the most important thing," she said. "But we do look at the type of courses the student took, the Scholastic Aptitude Test score, class rank and the extra-curricular activities—including leadership."

The exact number of students admitted will not be known until students confirm their acceptance by sending

in an enrollment deposit. Applicants were notified of the state of their application earlier this month.

Despite forecasts that the number of college-age students will decrease in the next few years, Folger said she did not think it would seriously hurt admissions at UNC.

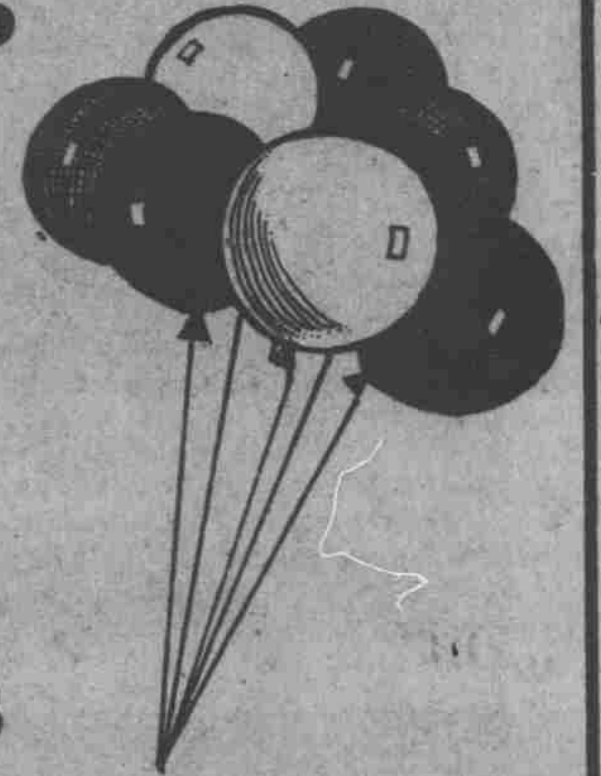
"I really don't think it will affect the number of students we enroll since a college degree will always be important," she said. "We've been averaging 11,000 applications per year for a while now."

Enrollment at UNC has increased sharply during the past 20 years. In 1960, only 8,592 students attended the University. Recently, enrollment has hovered around 21,000.

Even though UNC receives a high volume of applications every year, every student is scrutinized closely, Folger said.

"I think we do a very good job," she said. "One thing people think is that it is all computerized. Each application we get is looked at individually, with each activity taken into consideration."

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