

HEALTH

Tips for a Healthier Winter

Andie Bulman
Assignment Editor

At the start of every winter, hundreds of students make resolutions to lose weight, quit smoking and to just improve overall health in general.

But come the next year, how many of those students have actually achieved these lofty goals? An even better question might be how many of these students have already given up by February?

The key to achieving better health, according to the good people of Charlottetown's health food headquarters The Root Cellar, is to take little steps.

Here are the easiest health habits that UPEI students could change.

1) Eat More Veggies.

Ok it seems like a no brainer. But the reality is that most students who claim they eat plenty of vegetables are really only counting soggy pieces of broccoli at that bottom of a lean cuisine box. In order to get the complex compounds that the human body needs to fight off cancer causing free radicals, real produce has to be consumed. Some cheap options include organic baby carrots, organic greens and Island potatoes from the Atlantic Superstore.

2) Do not drink tap water

Island tap water has a pretty good public safety record, however impurities can enter tap water through erosion of pipes and secretion of pesticides, and many

of these chemicals are in tap water in such minute amounts that governments do not think it necessary to alarm the public. Here's an exciting list of impurities that may exist in your water - radon, fluoride, arsenic (or rat poison), lead, copper, fertilizer, asbestos, herbicides, not to mention an astounding variety of bacteria, viruses and parasites. Please, please drink bottled water.

3) Take the Stairs

Again, it seems obvious, but all too often students are seen waiting for the elevator on the ground floor in main building instead of walking three lousy flights. According to the Canadian Public Health Agency, each minute on the stairs burns 8-11 calories, stair climbing is a pretty simple way of sneaking a bit more exercise in on busy school days.

4) Drink Less Alcohol

A typical UPEI student binge drinks about once or twice a week, usually trivia at the Wave and a weekend night, most see this as typical and therefore not a problem. However, consuming large amounts of alcohol more than twice a week can cause some serious damage that may not be noticeable for years. This includes Diabetes, increased risk of cancer, inevitable weight gain, high blood pressure, and most commonly peripheral nervous system damage. Even cutting out one night of drinking a week can slash your chances of developing these health problems later.

URATarget group aims message at part-time smokers

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By now you've seen the posters, bright, eye-catching and proclaiming in bold font that "Midterm Menthols are Still Cigarettes."

Or perhaps you've seen the URATarget kids at the Wave, decked out in identical incandescent pink tees; passing out matches for those "Occasional smokers."

Maybe you have even been asked to join the group's face book account where you can watch local artists acting in some pretty hilarious anti-smoking campaigns or chat with your friends about the evils of the tobacco industry.

While student reaction to the campaign has been mixed, the message itself is very hard to miss, which URATarget group member Colin Campbell said is exactly the point.

"We want students to know and realize that occasional smoking is still smoking, that even the occasional smoke can lead to ill health."

The group, which is a collaboration of Holland College and UPEI students and the PEI Lung Association, is attempting

to get their message out by using the same forums that tobacco companies use to sell their products.

Campbell thinks the group's methods will have an effect.

"Fear motivates high school students to quit smoking or avoid it but it doesn't have the same effect on older students. We hope that humour, sarcasm and irony will help get the message across."

The URATarget group has focused their attention on students who smoke only when they are stressed or drinking as opposed to the half a pack a day smoker because they believe that this type of thinking is prevalent among the 18-24 age group.

"People know smoking is bad. It's not a big secret. As a result people are only smoking sometimes, and are getting very good at justifying it. Our goal is to help students recognize that occasional smoking is still bad for you, and that is some circumstances it might lead to being a pack a day smoker."

If you are interested in finding out more about the URATarget group, they can be contacted at info@uratarget.com

uratarget.com
Possible Futures

Possible future B 2010
result: gets minimum wage job as dodgeball coach the local youth centre

Student ID Card
Client # 879045-23
Expires: 2010.06.30
University of Prince Edward Island
Matt Anderson
Matt Anderson
Student Signature
The University of Prince Edward Island

Profile
Matt Anderson
2nd year education student, UPEI

Goals
Get certified as a special needs teacher, finish a marathon, quit smoking when he becomes a father.

Smoking Status
Only at social events.

Possible future A 2010
result: Teacher of the Year, marathon runner

2010: Teacher of the Year, Crosses Finish Line at Marathon.
"The teaching award, the marathon - I'm the last person I thought would be doing these things." Anderson always wanted to run a marathon. He admits he used any excuse to keep himself from doing it. "I used to sit at home and watch TV. I was as far away from finishing a marathon as you could get. But once you start making those choices, the amount of support you get is amazing."

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