

# science

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## Fast food: the easy way isn't always nutritious

By KELLY CLARK  
Collegian Science Writer

A Quarter Pounder, a Big Mac, a Whopper, a Double-R, or a Big Classic. Fast food and college students seem to make the perfect couple, but students who rely on fast food for all their meals may not be meeting all of their body's nutritional needs.

Lorri Fishman, staff nutritionist and graduate assistant at the University's Nutrition Center, said fast food restaurants provide a standard quality of food, fast service, convenient location, and an inexpensive and tasty meal, she said, adding that the atmosphere may be entertaining at times.

However, relying on fast food for many meals creates the risk of falling into the trap of fast food restaurants — high calories, fat and sodium, Fishman said.

"Fast food is not all bad," Fishman said. "The general idea of fast food is that it has a place. It's obvious in the fast-paced lifestyle of Americans that fast food evolved."

Choosing a variety of entrees upon each visit to a restaurant can increase the chances of getting the needed nutrients, Fishman added. For example, choosing milk instead of soda will provide additional calcium and protein, she said.

One popular fast food meal at McDonald's includes a hamburger, french fries and a Coke. A quarter pound hamburger provides protein, iron, and some B vitamins from the enriched bun; the vitamin C normally found in potatoes is lost in the process of deep frying, which leaves french fries providing mostly just fat, she



Long lunch lines at McDonald's on E. College Ave. show the popularity of fast food among college students. Unfortunately, students often overeat on a quick

meal and do not meet the nutritional needs of their bodies. Their fast-paced lives may suffer when they sacrifice these needs for a quick bite.

protein is contained in the crust, which is prepared with a high protein flour.

The combination of 100-percent dairy mozzarella and pizza cheeses and meat toppings such as pepperoni, ham, sausage, ground beef, and bacon also provide protein, the pamphlet said.

"Pizza has everything you need, especially if you get vegetables on it. Some shops offer a whole grain roll, which increases the nutritional content of the pizza," Fishman said.

Subs, also popular with students,

can be nutritious depending on how they are prepared, Fishman said. For instance, a typical 12-inch ham and cheese sub contains about 1,200 calories, she said, adding that about 320 calories can be saved if the mayo and oil dressing are not added.

Ham and turkey are usually the lowest fat-containing meats, whereas many of the Italian lunch meats contain higher fat and sodium, she said.

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## Pre-holiday stress can be relieved

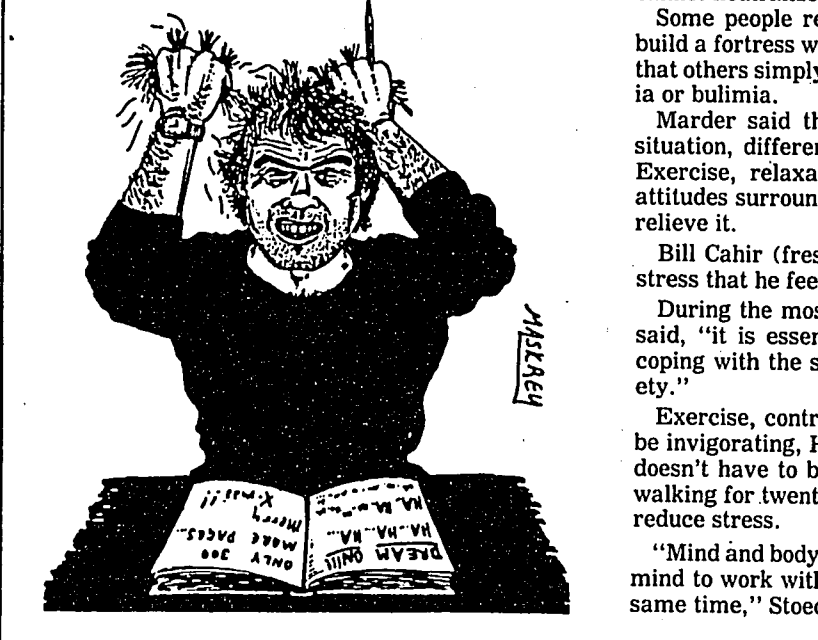
By HEATHER WILSON  
Collegian Science Writer

Final exams, holidays and relationship problems all lead to one thing — stress.

In the last few days before the end of the semester, everyone will feel a bit stressed. "It is a natural part of life," said Dorothy Harris, a University professor of physical education. "The importance of stress is the body's reaction to it and what action is taken to relieve it."

Stress can arise from working under time or peer pressure, or under pressure to perform academically, athletically or artistically, Harris said. Citing illness as another form of stress, she added that "stress is anything that disrupts the homeostasis of the body."

"Life is stressful, but stress is also essential. We can not remove stress from our lives, so we must learn to



cope with it," Harris said. "If we would only worry between our ears we'd be okay," she added.

Martin Marder, a clinical psychologist at the University's Center for Counseling and Psychological Services, said the body's reaction to these disruptions and stress can cause hypertension, gastrointestinal problems, eating disorders, and insomnia.

"We have reason to believe that stress is a factor in many diseases," Marder said.

Karl Stoedelake, professor of physical education, said the body responds to anxiety and stress by releasing adrenaline into the bloodstream, which in turn causes an increase in heart rate and a change in breathing patterns. In time, hypertension, an elevation in blood pressure, can be caused by stress, he said.

Some people react to stress by producing excessive amounts of acid that can lead to stomach pain or ulcers if the stress continues and the lining of the stomach cannot neutralize the acid, Stoedelake added.

Marder said that, depending on the problem and situation, different solutions will help relieve stress. Exercise, relaxation techniques and assessment of attitudes surrounding the source of stress can help to relieve it.

Bill Cahir (freshman-DUS) exercises to reduce the stress that he feels, Harris agreed with his plan.

During the most stressful time of semester, Harris said, "It is essential to use exercise as a means of coping with the stress. Physical action absorbs anxiety."

Exercise, contrary to what many people think, can be invigorating, Harris said. But, she added, exercise doesn't have to be vigorous to relieve stress. Simply walking for twenty to thirty minutes is enough to help reduce stress.

"Mind and body are one. You can't say you'll put the mind to work without putting the body to work at the same time," Stoedelake said.

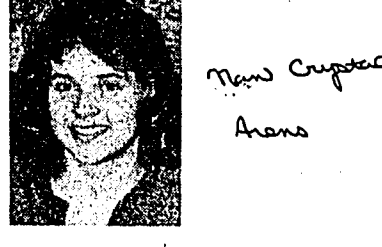
For most (women, mainly), the goal of any diet is to take off just enough weight to fit into a new dress for the formal, look sexy in that bathing suit or wear shorts in the summer without registering on the Richter scale.

But the special occasion always passes, summer turns to fall, and those pounds pile back on.

Now, I don't claim to be one of those slender health gurus you see leading aerobics classes. In fact, I have my own chronic case of the chubbies. But there's something wrong with a diet — any diet — that only offers that you'll look great for one night. What about the other 27,000 nights of your life? Come on, ladies (and guys too), you're worth more than that.

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## The Fool-Proof Diet



should help you look and feel great for more than a few short weeks in the summer — without the months of agony while you're "on" the diet.

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- Whole grain bread and pasta. These provide complex carbohydrates — your body needs for fuel. Whole grain foods and brown rice also have fiber needed for a healthy digestive tract.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables. Vegetables provide vitamins and minerals the body needs to function efficiently. Fruit is packed with fiber and also has lots of sugar. For one-fifth the calories, an apple is just as good as a Snickers bar for the mid-afternoon hunger.
- Protein. This doesn't have to be the all-American steak. In fact, red meat like beef and pork has a lot of unwanted fat that adds calories and may contribute to heart disease and certain types of colon cancer later in life. Remember, the FOOL-PROOF DIET should serve you well for a lifetime.
- Poultry and fish provide less fatty sources of protein. But if you don't like meat at all, beans, eggs, and good old peanut butter make good substitutes.
- Milk and cheese. Another good source of protein, milk and cheese also add vitamins and much-needed calcium to the FOOL-PROOF DIET. Unless you're a growing calf, however, best stick to the low fat kind.
- Water. Most of your body weight is water. Kidneys need liquid to efficiently remove wastes from your body. Besides, water's cheap, has no calories and no caffeine.

Kearney suggested two alternative drinks for heavy coffee drinkers wanting to reduce their caffeine intake. "Hot cider with cloves or cinnamon or hot cranberry juice with nutmeg or a slice of lemon are two viable alternatives," she said.

## Caffeine decreases the ability to concentrate

By RUTH FOLLMER  
Collegian Science Writer

Consuming large amounts of caffeine may shorten your reaction time but it will also reduce your ability to concentrate, a public health nutritionist said.

"Aside from shortening your reaction time, caffeine does not appear to help in the performance of complex tasks and may be slightly disruptive," Barbara Kearney said.

Non-habitual coffee drinkers who suddenly increase their consumption, as many students do during finals, can suffer much more severe side-effects from caffeine, a mildly habit-forming stimulant, than habitual coffee drinkers, she said.

Students who begin consuming large amounts of caffeine to stay awake may experience an inability to sleep, rapid beating of heart, increased blood pressure, and frequent urination, Kearney said.

Habitual caffeine users may experience dizziness, insomnia, anxiety, headaches, and nervousness as a result of high caffeine intake, explained Beth Bence, a graduate assistant at the University's nutrition center. If they decrease the amount of caffeine they consume, they may then experience withdrawal symptoms including reduced alertness and

irritability.

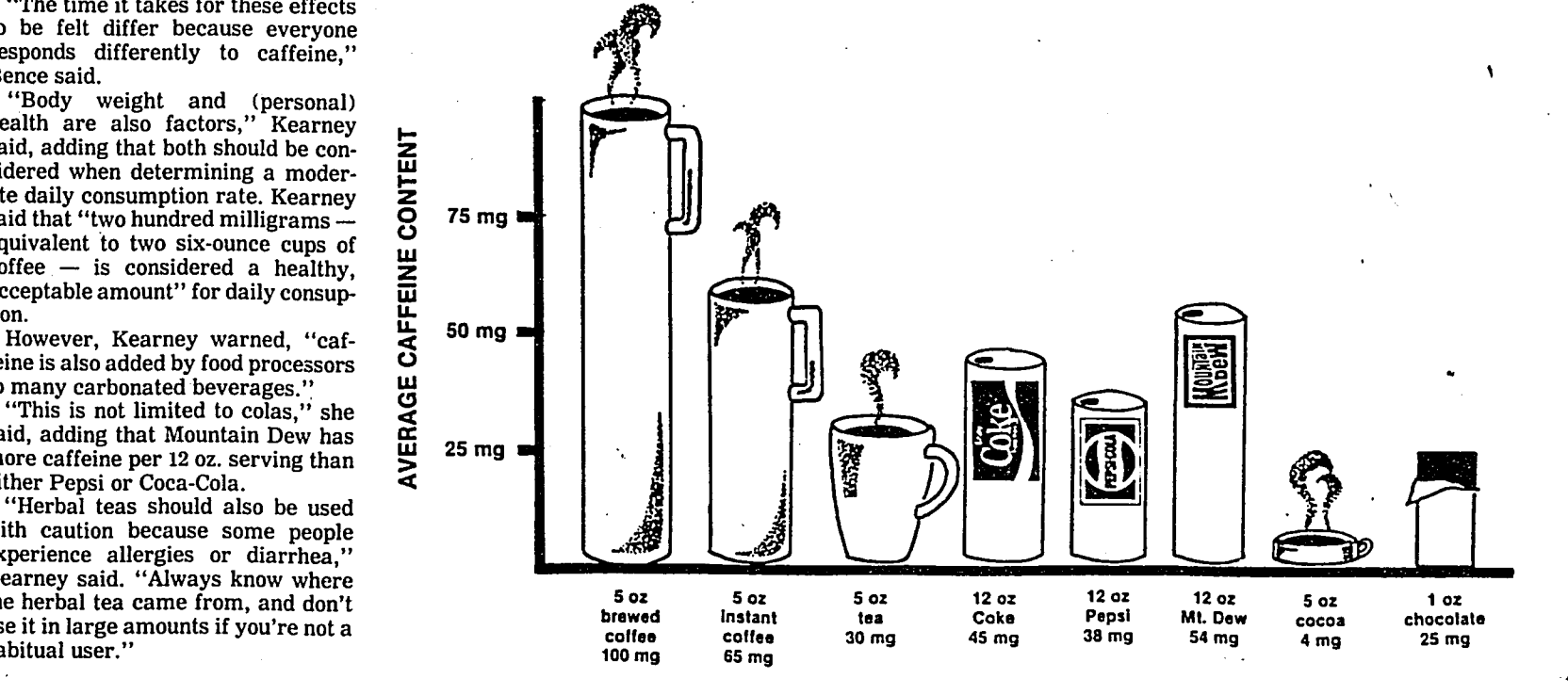
Withdrawal symptoms usually occur 12-16 hours after the last dose of caffeine," Kearney said, adding that people often believe they are experiencing tension headaches, when they are really experiencing symptoms of caffeine withdrawal.

Students who do not normally consume a lot of caffeine "may experience withdrawal symptoms following a day of unusually high caffeine consumption," she added.

The effects of caffeine are so severe because of its high absorption rate. "Ninety-nine percent of caffeine that is taken in orally is absorbed (into the body)," Bence said, adding that "peak levels, at which the effects of caffeine are felt the most, occur 15-45 minutes after ingestion."

Five temporary effects characterize caffeine consumption, Bence said. The central nervous system is stimulated, increasing the length of time students can stay awake and still remain alert. Heart action is also stimulated, and smooth muscle in the digestive tract and in blood vessels is relaxed. Caffeine also increases urine flow and stimulates the secretion of stomach acid, she said.

The relaxed smooth muscles in the digestive tract and the increased acid secretion may play an important role



## University needs female grad students

By LISA NURNBERGER  
Collegian Staff Writer

During a decade when women make up 50 percent of graduate school students nationwide, the University's graduate program is 41 percent women.

By comparison, Villanova University's graduate school is 51 percent women and Temple University's graduate school is 54 percent women, officials at the schools said.

University officials differ on reasons why Penn State averages in 9 percent below the national average in women graduate students.

Director of Graduate Admissions Charles Galgocsi said that this year, 34 percent of those applying to the University's graduate school were women.

Michael Johnson, research director for the University's Strategic Group on the Status of Women, said he believes the low number of women applicants is because the graduate curriculum, such as engineering, is traditionally male dominated. He said another reason is because of the University's in-the-country and most single, independent

women prefer to live in larger cities. Kathryn M. Moore, director of the University's Strategic Group on the Status of Women, said, however, that few women apply to the University's graduate school because sexual harassment and discrimination towards female graduate students exists here.

"People have a pretty good idea as to whether a school is welcoming to women or not," said Moore, adding that she believes the University is not.

Moore also said the lack of female role models in the school, inflexibility in course times and the need for a stronger recruitment policy for women students are factors affecting the number of women in the graduate school.

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## More women needed in administration

By KIRSTEN LEE SWARTZ  
Collegian Staff Writer

Women represent less than 10 percent of the University's administrators, and Penn State's job evaluation plans have not been revised in 20 years.

The Strategic Study Group on the Status of Women included this information in its first recommendations made this week to University President Bryce Jordan and the Chairwoman of the University's Commission for Women, Marilyn Eastridge. The recommendations are designed to improve the status of women at the University.

A recommendation called for the recruitment of women administrators and faculty.

The study group noted that hiring within the University should be especially if women administrators and faculty because the pool of qualified women at the University is limited.

The recommendation called on the University to attempt to attract and recruit talented women

from other universities, colleges and appropriate agencies.

Kathryn Moore, chairwoman of the study group, said women who are not faculty members or administrators have difficulty advancing in the ranks of the University system because the positions are classified in four separate tracts.

Second, the group recommended that all non-faculty positions should be organized into one system that would provide more opportunity for advancement and movement within the University's job system, Moore said.

Almost 80 percent of the 663 "regular part-time" employees are female and paid at lower rates than full-time employees performing the same work, the group noted.

A third recommendation stated that the University should provide appropriate salary increases to "regular part-time" employees who work more than 750 hours per year for two consecutive years, Moore said.

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