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## On-Campus Interviews



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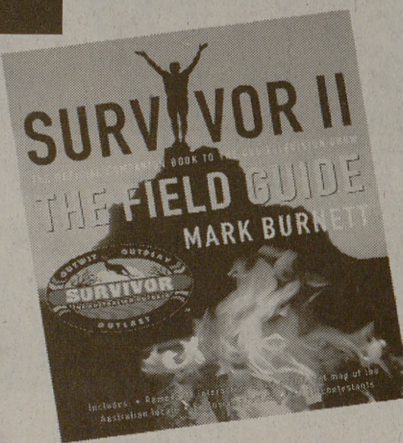
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# An apple a day... Doctors, nurses offer students advice to avoid illness in winter

By RUPERT GARCIA

The Battalion

Students are faced with many challenges throughout their years at Texas A&M. Even though some would like to think of themselves as invincible, getting sick is inevitable. Luckily, there are many ways to combat this problem, some which rest upon students taking the initiative to seek medical attention and become educated about how to take care of themselves.

"Students are more prone to getting sick at this time of the year, because of the different viruses transmitted while at home during winter break," said Sharon Davila, a registered nurse in the Department of Preventive Medicine at the A.P. Beutel Health Center. "Any time a person is in a crowded situation or around small children, which is usually the case during winter break, it is easier to catch a virus."

Dr. Ann Reed, associate director for Clinical Services at Beutel, said viruses, which cause flus, colds and other upper-body respiratory infections, are in abundance.

"There are 200 different types of upper-body respiratory infections caused by viruses," Reed said. "Cold symptoms, which may include fever, sore throat and sneezing, among others, should not last more than seven to 10 days, and, if they do, a physician's care is probably the best thing."

Davila said the best way to avoid transmitting a virus is for people to wash their hands after using the restroom. Washing should last at least 30 seconds and soap and water should be used.

"People would be surprised to know how many others go to the bathroom and do not wash their hands," she said.

Davila said the most obvious way to avoid getting sick is to simply stay away from sick people. However, she said this can be hard because many students still attend classes while they are sick.

"The student is carrying the virus, therefore putting the people in class at higher risk of catching the same virus," Davila said.

Although they should not go to class, a doctor's care is not always necessary.

**"People would be surprised to know how many others go to the bathroom and do not wash their hands."**

—Sharon Davila, R. N.  
A.P. Beutel Health Center

"It is up to the student to do the best thing, which is to get some rest and give the body's immune system time to fight off the virus," Reed said. "If it feels serious, like not being able to swallow or having a fever above 101 degrees, then it is best to contact a physician."

Reed said a cold needs to be treated either by resting or taking antibiotics, or both because in most cases, a cold will not get better when ignored.



SELSO GARCIA/THE BATTALION

"Undergraduate college students show poor recognition of typical presentations of the common cold and have misconceptions about effective treatment," according to a January article in the Journal of Family Practice.

"I once had a cold that would not go away, and it was not until I went to the doctor who told me to get some rest and prescribed me some antibiotics, that I got better," said Nicholas Chacon, a freshman kinesiology major.

Even though patients should take medicine a doctor prescribes, Davila said antibiotics may not always work for cold symptoms and may be detrimental in some cases.

"The more antibiotics are used, the more viruses become resistant, therefore becoming obsolete in a case where antibiotics are really needed," she said.

Davila said the flu season begins in January and runs through the first weeks of March. Flu shots are usually administered beginning in October until December. Shots usually take one to two weeks before they are effective.

Reed said symptoms of different diseases vary from person to person, and some diseases which may not seem serious may be serious, while non-serious diseases may seem the opposite.

"Some symptoms are so random that I have treated patients complaining about indigestion when in fact they have just suffered a heart attack," Reed said. "Serious diseases usually are easy to spot because in such instances, people usually get very ill very fast."

Davila said if students want more information on avoiding getting sick, they should visit Beutel, which is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## WELCOME BACK, AGGIES!

It's not too soon to start thinking about life after A&M. If you are about to graduate and are interested in the travel industry, check out American Airlines!

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