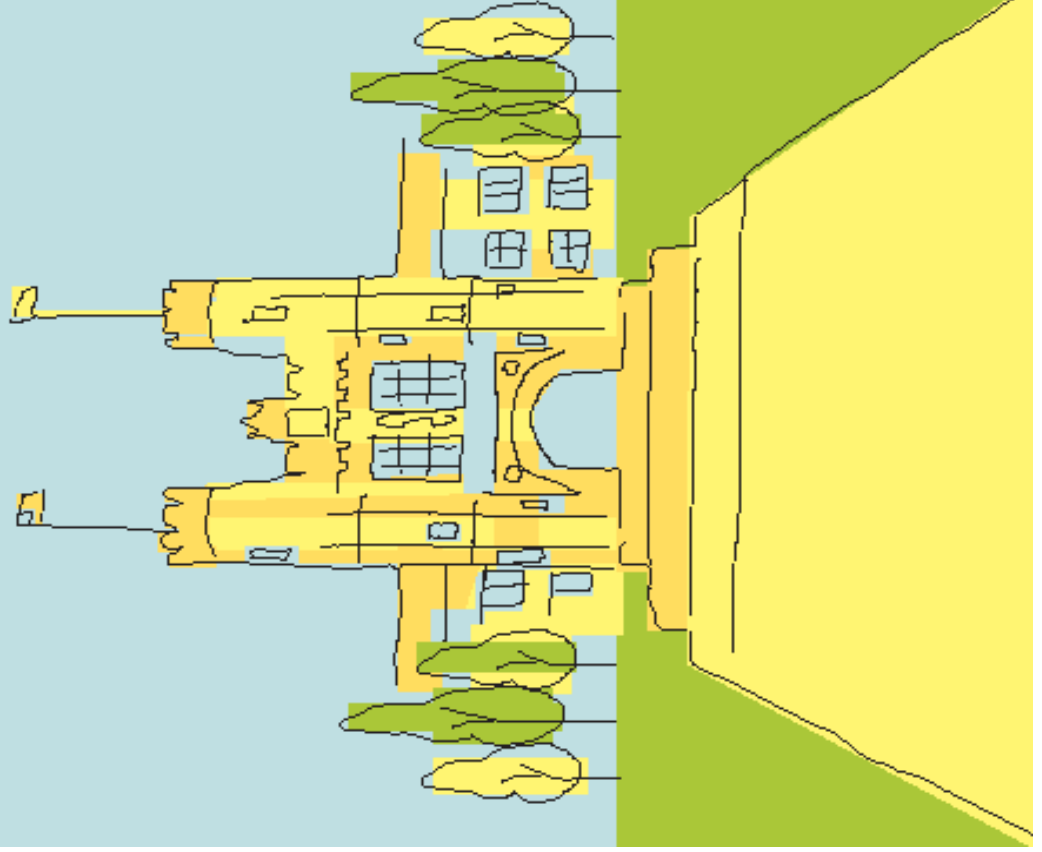


# your guide

to living with serious/chronic  
illness at Washington University



## Project Good Days and Student Health Services

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY Campus YMCA  
a branch of the YMCA of Greater St. Louis





## EST

- WU's Emergency Support Team for medical emergencies
- Phone: 5-5555 from any campus phone  
(314) 935-5555 from a cell phone
- Hours: 24 hours a day/7 days a week
- <http://su.wustledu/~cst/>

### **Disability Resource Center**

- Located in Cornerstone in Gregg House
- Phone: (314) 935-4062 (voice and TTY)
- Hours: M-F: 9am – 5pm
- <http://disability.wustledu>

### **Uncle Joe's Peer Counseling**

- Located in the basement of Gregg Hall on the South 40
- Phone: (314) 935-5099 (Beeper number)
- Hours: Every night 10 pm – 1am
- <http://su.wustledu/~unclejoe/>

### **Residential Peer Health Educators**

- Available in Wayman/Crow, WGE, Liggett/Koenig, and Brookings resident halls
- Fellow students trained in “listening to health-related concerns and providing confidential resource guidance”

### **Advisors**

Your advisors are always here to listen.

- RAs, RCDs, Peer Advisors
- Faculty Advisors

### **Project Good Days**

- Campus Y group that raises awareness about chronic/serious illness
- Email: [wustlpgd@gmail.com](mailto:wustlpgd@gmail.com)
- <http://campusy.wustledu/pgd.html>

## Introduction

We in Project Good Days, a Campus Y group that supports youth with chronic/serious illness, understand that being a student with chronic/serious illness here at Washington University provides its own set of challenges. For this reason, we have created this pamphlet to help you balance all areas of college life and your health.

This pamphlet is designed to be an easy reference guide for you, so we have separated it into sections for each area of your life you may encounter here at WU.

### **Professors and Classes: How to Balance Your Courses and Your Health**

### **Student Health Services/Doctors/Hospital: Managing Your Care**

### **Roommates: To Tell or Not To Tell? How Much Information?**

### **Friends: Keeping Relationships Healthy**

### **Life as WU Student: All of the Other Crazyness**

### **Family Back Home: Worries, Concerns**

### **Communicating with Employers: How to Handle the Internship & Job Application Process**

### **Resources: If You Need Further Support**

This pamphlet is for reference only and should not supplant advice from your health care provider or university officials.

## Professors and Classes:

### How to Balance Your Courses and Your Health

#### Assignments

Get started on assignments early. Everyone and their dog will tell you this, but for good reason – starting early helps a lot. If nothing else, read through the assignment and get a feel for what is required.

#### Informing Your Professors and Your Dean

If you are likely to have a significant health problem (will miss class, may need an extension) during the semester, alert your professors and your dean as soon as possible. Let your professors know that you will do your best in their classes, but you may have to deal with health issues. Be sure to back up your claims by going to class and doing your best on the work! Your professors will likely appreciate the warning, since you are going to them *before* there is a problem. If there is a problem later, they will also notice the difference between your good days and your bad days. Also talk with your advisor and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) about possible help. Some possible help and protection is guaranteed by law for certain illnesses.

#### Work with Your Dean

If a problem arises, your dean can be instrumental in coordinating potential conflicts with your professors. Also, messages from your dean have quite a bit of influence with professors if you encounter any difficulties.

## Resources: For Further Support

If you need further help, there are many resources available to you:

#### Medical Services

- Located within Habib Student Health and Wellness Center in Dardick House on the South 40
- Phone: (314) 935-6666 (includes after hours nurse answer line)
- Hours: MTTh: 8 am – 6 pm  
W: 10 am – 6 pm  
F: 8am – 5 pm  
Sat: 9am – 1pm (Urgent Care only)
- <http://shs.wustl.edu/medicalServices/>

#### Mental Health Services

- Located within Habib Student Health and Wellness Center
- Services include individual, group, and couples counseling, crisis counseling, and referral.
- Phone: (314) 935-6695
- Hours: MTThF 8:30am – 6:00pm  
W: 10:00am – 6:00pm  
F: 8:30am – 5:00pm
- Available to help in urgent situations seven days a week, 24 hours a day.
- <http://shs.wustl.edu/mentalHealth/>

#### Health Promotion Services

- Located within Habib Student Health and Wellness Center
- Phone: (314) 935-7139
- Hours: MTThF: 9 am – 5 pm,  
W: 10 am – 5 pm
- <http://shs.wustl.edu/healthPromotion/>

It will help if you do your research to understand the tasks/requirements of the job as fully as possible. Think through what would need to be redesigned for you to perform the work tasks so that you can assertively but graciously discuss this information with the employer if you are hired. It's best to be open but factual and professional.

Following are a few career-related resources you might find useful.

Resources:

The Career Center (individual advising, print resources)  
[www.careers.wustl.edu](http://www.careers.wustl.edu) or 935-5930

Ryan, Dr. Daniel. [Job Search Handbook for People with Disabilities](#). JIST Works. 2000. (in Career Center library)

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)  
<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

## Missing Class

If you know you will be missing class due to health issues, email the professor as soon as possible. Explain your situation and ask what will be covered in the class(es) you will miss and what you need to do to keep up with the material. Refer to the syllabus, but ask if there is additional material. Your attentiveness will be appreciated.

## Buddy System

When possible, make a friend or two in each of your classes. You can help each other study and if you are unable to go to class, you have someone to ask about notes.

## Going to SHS during Class – Get a Receipt!

If you ever need to visit Student Health Services during class, you should request a receipt which verifies the time and date you visited SHS and how long your visit lasted. This receipt can be used as documentation for your professors. Always offer this receipt to your professors. If your professor requires more information, you can sign a release of information and Student Health Services can talk with your professor.

If you ever need hospitalization or some other extended absence from classes, the SHS will, with your permission, notify your dean. Your dean will let your professors know as needed.

## Class Stresses

Remember: it's okay to have a bad day. Yes, classes are important, but so are you. Classes are not worth making yourself ill over them. If you find you are struggling, ask for help. The WU community is full of people who are here to help you. Talk with your professors and TAs. If you need further help, Cornerstone is an excellent resource.

## Student Health Services/Doctors/Hospital: Managing Your Care

### Make an Initial Visit

If you are likely to require regular visits to Student Health Services, make an initial visit so they can get to know you and your medical history. The staff at Student Health Services is especially interested in forming a doctor/patient relationship with students with chronic/serious illness.

### Visiting Student Health Services

Medical appointments can be made online at <http://shs.wuustl.edu/online Sched.htm>. Simply sign on as you would via WebSTAC and schedule your appointment. To make an appointment with Mental Health Services, please call 935-6695.

### Making a Same Day Appointment

Call as early as possible to increase your chances of seeing someone the same day. A nurse can do a short assessment to determine when you need to be seen and what should be done.

### Sign up for Health E-News

To keep up to date with events at SHS, including when flu shots will be offered, sign up for *Health E-News*, the bi-weekly SHS newsletter. You can also view the newsletters at <http://shs.wuustl.edu/newsletters.htm>.

### Flu Shot

If you are eligible for a flu shot, you might want to take advantage of the walk-in clinics at the Habib Student Health and Wellness Center in the fall. Often, both the shot and the nasal spray are available for a low fee. Check the Student Health Services website (<http://shs.wuustl.edu>) for details.

## Communicating with Employers: How to Handle the Internship & Job Application Process

The goal of the internship or job search process is to focus the employer's attention on your skills, interests, experiences and overall ability to perform the job. The more you direct your communications towards your *abilities* that relate to the job, therefore, the more successful you will be.

Your cover letter and resume do not need to address your illness. In some instances, however, your chronic/serious illness can be an obvious *strength* worth mentioning up front. If you are experienced at living with diabetes, for example, and you apply for a position with the Diabetes Association, it makes sense to discuss this qualifying asset in your cover letter.

Consider the requirements of the position and your ability to perform those functions. If these two variables match, and you would not need special accommodations in the workplace (i.e. your illness is controlled with medication, which you take regularly), there is no reason to mention your illness in the application process.

If these two variables do not match and you would require accommodations to successfully carry out the job requirements (i.e. extra time off for doctor's appointments, adjustments to your work station), or if your illness is visible/obvious, the employer may have questions about your ability to do the job. In this case, you should prepare for the conversation.

## Family Back Home: Worries, Concerns

### Keep Lines of Communication Open

When you are away at college, your family back home may worry about you and your health. To help alleviate their worries, try to keep lines of communication open. If you have a health problem here at WU, let your family know. Tell them that you will keep them in the loop and what you are doing to protect your health. Remember, not knowing what is going on is much scarier than knowing the facts.

From a parent's perspective, it is alarming to receive a call from an RA, nurse, friend, etc. about your child. You may not be able to avoid this situation, but do your best to let your family know what is going on and how you are dealing with the situation. If you would like your parents to be able to get information directly from Student Health Services, you can sign a release of information.

### Let Them Know How They Can Help

If there's something your family can do, let them know. They may not be able to do something to make the situation better, but if listening would help, let them know.

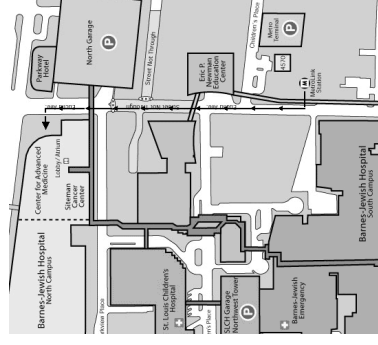
## Other Health Care Venues

If you need further care than what Student Health Services provides, you may be referred to the Center for Advanced Medicine at Barnes Jewish Hospital. If you do not have a ride available, the Center is easily accessible by Metro or the Gold shuttle.

### Directions to the Center for Advanced Medicine (via Metro)

1. Make sure that you have your WU ID along with your U-Pass.
2. Take the Metro on the East bound line (Emerson Park or Shiloh-Scott) to Central West End.
3. Turn right after going up the stairs. You will be on Euclid Avenue.
4. Continue on Euclid until you see the Center for Advanced Medicine on your left. The entrance to the lobby is off of Euclid and Forest Park Avenue.

### Map to the Center for Advanced Medicine from the Central West End Metro Stop



Modified from <http://www.wuphyscians.wustl.edu/campusmap.html>

**Note:** To get back to WU from the Center for Advanced Medicine, go back to the Metro stop and take the I-44 Shrewsbury line (not the Lambert Airport line) back to the Skinker stop. This will drop you off at Brookings. You can also continue to the Big Bend stop if that is closer to where you live, as it would if you live in the Village.

## Returning to WU from Barnes Jewish ER

If you ever go to Barnes Jewish ER by ambulance and do not have a ride back to WU afterwards, tell your nurse that WUPD will come to pick you up. Your nurse can call them and arrange the ride for you. Wait outside (or right inside the lobby, before security) for them when you are discharged. Your ride may be a WUPD car or someone from WU Transportation Services. Both types of vehicles will say WU on the side.

## Health Insurance

- Make sure you have your insurance card(s) in your ID holder/wallet. Currently, you must print out your own card for your WU insurance policy.
- If applicable, check with your parents or spouse if you have insurance coverage beyond your WU policy. Please note that your WU policy is your primary and any other health insurance is your secondary. If you have secondary insurance, make a copy of both cards and your receipt when submitting claims to both your primary and secondary insurance.
- If you are sent a bill for medical services, *e.g.*, ambulance services, be sure to submit the claim (or check that the claim has been submitted previously) to your insurance before paying the bill.
- If you receive them, keep every Explanation of Benefits you receive from your insurance company. These outline what the charges are, how much the insurance company has paid, and the reasoning behind payment decisions.

## Stress Busters

- Health Promotion Services offers individual appointments and four-week workshops for stress management, relaxation training sessions, meditation instruction, and a resource library. Call 935-4095 for more information.
- Find some extracurricular activity that you enjoy. There are so many opportunities here that cover so many interests. Check out the Activities Fair at the beginning of each semester for new ideas.
- Exercise! It reduces stress and helps keep you healthy. The AC and the Fitness Center in Wohl have plenty of workout machines and the Fitness Center offers a wide variety of classes.
- Take a nap. Twenty minutes can do wonders.
- Make sure you drink enough water. Dehydration can add to stress. Having a water bottle at hand may help.
- Get a massage. For an appointment, visit the South 40 Fitness Center in Wohl or email [fitness@wustl.edu](mailto:fitness@wustl.edu).
- Take study breaks to get up and walk around. A small break will help you work more efficiently.

## Life as a WU Student: All of the Other Crazyness

### Establish a Routine

Make sure you eat well, sleep enough hours, and take any medications you need at a consistent time every day. The more automatic it becomes, the less of a hassle it will be! This also helps with homework – if you can get into the rhythm of getting something done each day, it will be easier to tackle all of your work.

### Create a Sick Day Kit

Suggested items:

- First aid kit (bandages and such)
- Thermometer
- Pain/fever reducer (e.g. acetaminophen or ibuprofen)
- Cold medicine
- Medicine for mild stomach upset
- Anti-allergy medication
- Extras of any regular supplies you may need

We hope you will not need to use these supplies, but it never hurts to be prepared. It always seems like you can never get these items when you need them. Besides, you might be able to help that cute guy or girl down the hall with this kit someday!

### Use Good Judgment

With all of the pressures and opportunities of life as a WU student, try to use your best judgment and take good care of yourself. As you know, this is even more important for you than for a student without a chronic/serious illness.

## Roommates: To Tell or Not to Tell? How Much Information?

### Let Them Know the Basics

Telling your roommates about your health can be tricky. Always remember that you do not have to let them know any more information than you are comfortable sharing. That being said, if you have special equipment, medication, etc. that they are likely to see, let them briefly know about what they will see. Also, if there are special situations that they should be aware of (for example, what happens in an attack of low blood sugar if you have diabetes), let them know. It's much easier to tell your roommates information in advance and have it not be an issue than try to explain after something has gone wrong.

### Present the Info with Humor

If you're worried about how they'll react to your condition, consider how you bring it up to them. If you are grim and make it sound horrible, they may be scared or even distance themselves from you. If you are truthful but remain positive and upbeat, their response will mirror yours. Humor is the key.

### Check Resources Specific to Your Illness

There may be literature specific to your illness available to help you briefly explain your situation to your roommates. For example, the Childhood Diabetes Foundation has tips for college students, including a sample fact sheet on Diabetes and a sample letter for your roommates that explains what Diabetes is and how they can help. See <http://www.childrensdiabetesfdn.org/educ/college.html> for details.

## Emergency Medical Cards

If you feel comfortable with your roommates, suggest trading emergency medical cards. If you live on campus, your RA will have your official med card on file, but your roommates are more likely to be around if you have a problem and need to call EST. If you do not feel comfortable giving such a card to your roommate, either keep it handy in your room or give the card to a friend on your floor. If you ever need to call EST (or your roommates need to call EST for you), you or your roommates can quickly give EST all of your pertinent medical information with this card. The card also makes contacting your family much easier.

To make the card, take a 3x5 index card and write the following information on it:

Name:

Diagnosis/es:

Medications:

Allergies:

Emergency Contact Info:

**Note:** Also keep an extra copy of this card in your wallet or with your ID. You may also want to consider a medical alert bracelet if you do not have one.

## Medical Alert Bracelets

It goes without saying that coming to college brings newfound independence. Along with new responsibilities and freedoms, this also increases the chance that you will be alone or with someone who is unfamiliar with your medical history if an emergency occurs. To avoid confusion or uninformed medical decisions, it is imperative to wear a medical alert bracelet. This will list any allergies, medications, or illnesses medical personal should be aware of in an emergency. Your doctor should have access to brochures for ordering one. There are also various companies online that you can search for that sell various styles and types of medical alert jewelry.

## Friends: Keeping Relationships Healthy

### Communication

Communication is vital. You don't need to tell your friends everything about your condition and what you're going through, but you don't want to leave them in the dark either.

### Different Perspectives

Try to see things from others' perspectives. If your friend is freaking out because they missed last night's *American Idol*, that may seem silly to you because you have bigger things to worry about. Everyone has the right to worry and be upset regardless of the apparent size of their problems.

### They May Understand More Than You Know

Also remember that your friends may understand more than you think. Many people have issues to deal with, whether it be their health, their family, their past, etc. Your friends may not understand the specifics of your situation, but they may understand more than you expect. Don't underestimate them.

### Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

Your friends want to help you. If there is something they can do, let them know. If you need an ear, ask them when a good time to talk/unload is. Let them know how much you appreciate their support.