BE BODY POSITIVE!

Spring Break is just around the corner, but with the anticipation of beach trips and traveling to warmer climates comes the dangers of crash dieting. With ever-mounting pressures to show off six-packs or look good in a bathing suit while being surrounded by peers, students may turn to dangerous measures such as severe food restriction and over-exercising. We heard from three Lehigh students about the pressures they feel to look a certain way:

“I think the standards held for getting a Spring Break body are overrated. Year round I eat what I want, when I want as long as the food isn’t too unhealthy. When it comes time for bikini season, my eating habits pretty much stay the same. I don’t let certain occasions or events like Spring Break affect my lifestyle choices to the point that I’m putting my health at risk.” -Naomi Albinder, ’18

“There’s definitely some pressure felt around Spring Break to lose a few pounds to feel more confident on the beach. Dieting has always been a struggle for me, and when I took a trip with my friends freshman year I severely restricted what I ate before the trip. My friends kept complimenting me on how it looked liked I had lost weight, but no one understood how dangerous of a position I had put myself in to get there.” -Anonymous

“I was a distance runner in high school and, like many athletes, I wanted to perform at my highest possible ability, however I began taking my eating and exercise routine to an extreme. I thought this was the commitment needed to be an elite athlete. My mind tricked me into thinking my family and friends were being unsupportive and “promoting underachieving.” I overcame this disorder with the support of my amazing family and friends. I have learned that balance is possible and necessary.” -Michael Horgan ’16

Let’s be real: most people are concerned about their weight, muscularity, and/or size. Another truth? Lots of people are learning how to be body positive even when surrounded by messages that their bodies aren’t good enough. The keys? Listening to your body, voicing your opinions, and supporting friends, family, and yourself in the journey. Remember that your body changes every day, and it’s not going to stop changing. Try embracing those changes and even flaunt them once in a while. If you or a friend needs help, open up and seek support.

SPRING BREAK: What to Know Before You Go

Before you head out:

- Check out the prevalence of health risks at your destination, and line up necessary vaccinations and medications. Note that the Zika virus, which is primarily transmitted by infected mosquitoes, presents major health issues in many countries around the globe, and that there are several steps you can take to help prevent Zika. More information can be found at www.cdc.gov/zika

- Don’t go to an indoor tanning salon to prepare for your time in the sun. Indoor tanning is not safe. In addition to prematurely aging your skin, use of indoor tanning booths greatly increases the risk of melanoma. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/indoor_tanning.htm

- Make sure you can stay in touch. Contact your cell phone carrier to make sure you’ll have access to your services while you are away and what costs will be associated with long-distance calling, texts, etc.

- Make a copy of your passport to carry and scan a copy of it into your phone. Be sure to also have a copy of your health insurance card or other important information saved to your phone.

While you’re away:

- In the sun. Remember that the sun’s rays are stronger the closer you get to the Equator, and that sun-deprived winter skin can burn in a much shorter time. Wear sunscreen of at least SPF 30 strength. Apply it 20 minutes before sun exposure and reapply often.

- In the water. Be sure to take care when swimming in the ocean, particularly in areas where there are strong currents and rip tides. Even the strongest swimmers are at risk in such conditions.

- Sex and respect. If you are sexually active, use latex condoms to prevent infections that can be sexually transmitted, including Zika. Know what “consent” is and respect it for all forms of intimacy.

- Look out for each other. Don’t fall victim to “vacation mentality” and assume no harm can come to you or your friends simply because you are in a different location. Keep track of each other when you go out, and make sure your friends are in a state of mind to make safe and healthy decisions.

- Know where to get help. Take a moment to find out the location of local medical facilities. Know who to call or where to go in the case of a medical emergency.

- If you drink, do so responsibly. Know your limits. Don’t leave your drink unattended or accept drinks from someone you don’t know. Drink plenty of water and be sure to eat. Don’t drink and drive.

Lehigh After Dark

Open Mic Night, Fri., 3/4, 8pm-12am, Lamberton Hall
Frattle of the Bands, Sat., 3/5, 8pm-12am, Lamberton Hall
Color Me Mine, Sat., 3/5, 10pm-1am, Color Me Mine
Spring-Break-it Down Silent Disco, Thurs., 3/3, 10pm-2am, Grace Hall
Purim Masquerade, Thurs., 3/31, 10pm-1am, Lamberton Hall

Lehigh offers a wide range of events and activities for students to enjoy during their time off. Whether you’re looking for a night of laughs at an Open Mic Night or a chance to let loose at a silent disco, there’s something for everyone. And if you’re feeling creative, be sure to check out one of Lehigh’s many art classes or workshops to get your hands dirty and explore your artistic side.

Have an idea for a cool event on campus?

Is it...Alcohol-free? ✓ Thursday - Saturday? ✓ Between 10pm-2am? ✓
Lehigh supports healthy student behavior and encourages students to create new and fun evening activities that do not focus on alcohol. Lehigh After Dark can assist in the planning and funding process.

Learn more at: http://studentaffairs.lehigh.edu/lehigh-after-dark-lad

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