

Welcome to UMass Amherst!

Coming to college is a time of growth and change for you and your student ... exciting, but also stressful. Students are facing new challenges, making decisions and seeking balance among academic and social activities. You're learning along with them, as they move into this next phase of their lives. University Health Services (UHS) offers some facts and suggestions to help your family make this transition together.

The good news about...

DRINKING

2 out of 3 UMass Amherst students have 4 or fewer drinks when they party.*

SMOKING

78% of UMass Amherst students don't smoke cigarettes.**

SEX

75% of UMass Amherst students have had 0 or 1 sexual partner.**

*2006 Massachusetts Campus/Community Partnership Initiative Web-based survey of UMass Amherst students

**2005 American College Health Association National College Health Assessment survey of UMass Amherst students

COMING
TO
COLLEGE

*Tips for
families
of first-
year
students*

UMassAmherst

University Health Services

150 Infirmary Way
577-5000 • www.umass.edu/uhs

HELPING YOUR STUDENT

Talk about it

Your student may feel a sense of sadness and separation from home. This is a normal, important part of the transition, which generally passes. First-year students usually make new friends quickly – encourage them to branch out.

Encourage responsibility

Your student will face many new choices, which offer opportunities for growth and learning. Living with the consequences of these decisions, good or bad, can be empowering.

Strike a balance

Students often think the academic demands of college will be the same as high school and try to maintain the social lives they're used to. Disappointing mid-semester grades, and a crisis, can be the result. Remind them of the importance of balancing studies and socializing.

Call, write, e-mail, send packages

Although first-year students are usually eager for independence, most are still anxious for the security and familiarity of home. You can play a critical role in helping them stay in touch. They may not always write back, but mail and news from home matters a lot to your student.

Maintenance matters

College may be the first time your student has been responsible for his or her own wellbeing. Taking charge of sleep, stress, sexuality, nutrition and other health matters before problems arise is an important life skill.

Stress relief

Help your student identify healthy ways to work through stress, such as exercise, volunteerism and supportive relationships. Talking about it helps – with friends, family or a professional at UHS' Mental Health Services.

Get personal

Make an effort to talk about sexuality and relationships with your student. Listen openly and non-judgmentally to their concerns and questions. Familiarize yourself with campus resources, such as UHS.

Heavy drinking: everyone ISN'T doing it

Most UMass Amherst students don't drink heavily. In fact, the majority of those who choose to drink have 0 – 4. But, misperceptions about drinking persist.

Your student may be concerned about fitting in. Support their efforts to either not drink, or drink moderately. Know the facts, be understanding and provide reassurance.

Alcohol-free fun

Nine out of 10 students here say they know how to have fun without alcohol! With over 280 registered student organizations, eight student-run businesses, nine club sports, a thriving intramural athletic program and an abundance of volunteer opportunities, campus and community events, there's something for everyone to get involved with!

In the know

Learn about the vast array of services available on campus and encourage your student to take advantage of them. Talk with our administration, faculty and staff, and explore UMass Amherst websites. The UHS site, www.umass.edu/uhs, offers a wealth of health news, information and resources for students and families.

WHO TO CALL

University Health Services **577-5000**

- Athletic Health Enhancement Program **545-4588**
- BASICS (*Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students*) **577-5071**
- Center for Alcohol and other Drug Abuse Prevention **577-5181**
- Health Education **577-5181**
- Mental Health Services **545-2337**