

KPU Peer Wellness Newsletter

ISSUE #9

Spring 2025

Hello KPU students!

Let's welcome the new year and the new semester with open arms! We hope you had a wonderful time with family and friends, eating tons of delicious foods, and staying at home to relax. The holiday break offers us all an opportunity to recharge, so that you can start the year—and the semester—on the right track!

If you're new to KPU, we're the Peer Wellness Team, and we're students just like you! We host in-person and online events to share **health and wellness resources**, encourage **social connection** among our fellow students, and help you navigate **KPU services**.

What you are holding right now is our Spring 2025 newsletter! We write a new edition every semester to share KPU services, resources, and interesting health and wellness topics that can benefit you in the long run.

We hope you read through this copy! We also have our previous newsletters editions on our website that cover many different topics and resources that may be useful for you!

We've got tons of events in store for you so make sure to keep yourself updated! Follow our Instagram **@kpupeerwellness** for real-time and up-to-date information about our events and announcements or visit our website at **kpu.ca/peerwellness**. If you have questions about health and well-being on campus or about general KPU resources/services, you can send us a message either in Instagram or our website.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you in our events!

- The Peer Wellness Team

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CONNECT WITH US

- Receive real-time and up-to-date information about our events and announcements
- Watch our IG Lives @KPUPeerWellness
- Message us your questions about health and well-being on campus. We're also happy to chat about general KPU resources and services!



Assessment and Testing

Missed an exam? Need to write a midterm with accommodations? Want support understanding quiz requirements? Assessment and Testing Services can help you!

What Does Assessment and Testing Services Offer?



Admissions Testing: Identifies current **knowledge, abilities, and future needs** for student placement in appropriate courses. Assessment categories are: English, Math, and Vocational Trades. Students who live more than 100KM away from a KPU campus are eligible for virtual/remote Admissions Testing.

Access Exams: Used to support students who require accommodations to write a quiz, test, mid-term, final exam, or supplemental tests for a KPU course. Accommodations are changes in **when, where, or how you complete an exam**. Students seeking Access exams must first work with Accessibility Advisors for a referral, and must book **2 weeks prior** to the Access Exam testing date.

Some examples of exam accommodations include:

- **Alternate Formats** – Such as audio, e-text, or large print
- **Extended Exam Time** – Additional time to complete an exam
- **Distraction Reduced** – Exams are booked in a room where visual and auditory distractions are reduced
- **Technology** – Use of computer, calculators, spell-check, or specific software
- **Reader or Scribe** – A technology or person who reads a text aloud or writes your responses

Make-up Exams: Conducted with the instructor's approval, for students who have **missed an in-class exam due to medical or other valid reasons**. Students who are requesting a Make-up Exam are charged \$40 for 3 hours. Each additional hour (or portion thereof), is an additional \$10. Students must book their make-up exam at the same campus their course is taking place!

Corporate and External Exams: Invigilation services for **corporate and group clientele** in computerized or paper format for many types of exams including certification upgrades for employment. The department also offers Distance Education exams, where individuals may write an exam for another institution.

- ATS Richmond and ATS Civic Plaza hold 2 test sessions a week for **CELPIP!**

How do I Contact Assessment and Testing Services ?

Staff are not always on-campus to greet students, so please email: testing@kpu.ca or call **604-599-2368** before visiting! Visit kpu.ca/assessment-testing-services for more information, or visit Assessment and Testing offices:

- **KPU Surrey (Surrey):** Cedar Building, Room 3040
- **KPU Richmond (Richmond):** Main Building, Room 1360
- **KPU Civic Plaza (Surrey):** 8th Floor, Room 805
- **KPU Langley (Langley):** East Building, Room 1655
 - *Note: KPU Langley offers Access Exams for **KPU Tech (Cloverdale)** students*

Accessibility Services

If you are experiencing **disability-related barriers or challenges** that impact your learning, KPU's Accessibility Services can help you access various KPU support services. The department can also create personalized plans!

What Does Accessibility Services Offer?

Accessibility Services can help you learn about:

- Academic **accommodations** that are available and helpful for you
- Applying for disability-related **funding** (e.g. grants, bursaries)
- Finding or accessing **services** on campus
- Transitioning from **high school**

The Accessibility Team will work with you and your instructors to create **tailored plans** that assist you in **accessing information, participating** in the classroom, and **demonstrating your skills and knowledge**. Common accommodations include:

- Assessment accommodations
- Accessible course material
- Assistive technology

How Do I Contact Accessibility Services?

Visit kpu.ca/access to explore Accessibility Services resources, including what to expect as a student and how to get started working with Accessibility Services. If you are interested in booking an appointment, contact **604-599-2828** or access@kpu.ca to speak with a member of the Accessibility Services team.

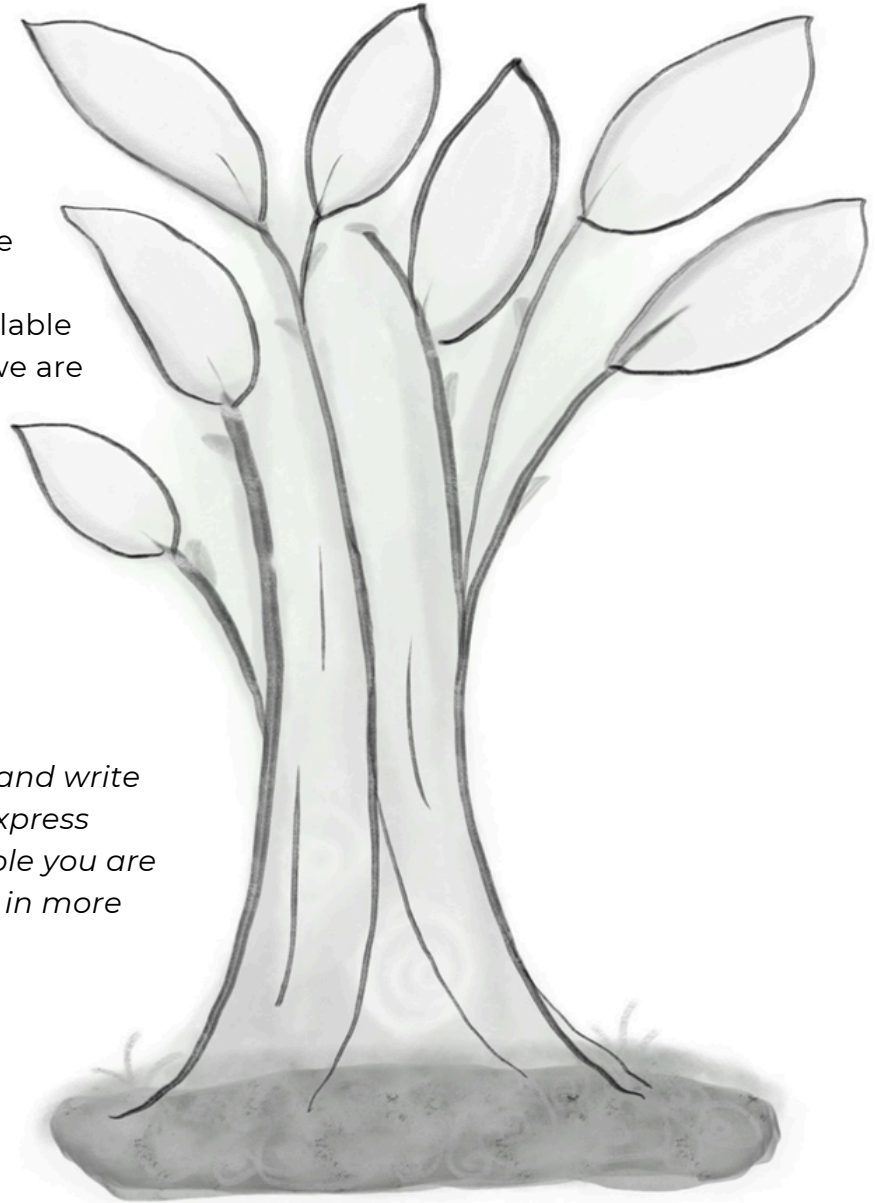


Gratitude Tree

It's important to appreciate what we have and the opportunities that are available to us. Reflecting on what we are grateful for helps us to think about the positives, find ways to improve, and give back to others.

What do you feel grateful for?

Take some time to reflect and write one word in each leaf to express some of the things or people you are grateful for. You can draw in more leaves as needed



Now that you have thought about how you feel in the moment, it's time to consider planting trees for the future.

If you could sow one seed related to **personal growth**, what would it be for?

If you could sow one seed related to **academic growth**, what would it be for?

If you could sow one seed related to **giving back to others**, what would it be for?

Health Article: Homecooked Meals

In today's busy world, managing work, school, and a social life can make cooking feel like a chore. However, cooking is not just about preparing food; it's about prioritizing health, building connections, saving money, and enjoying the process. So even though cooking may sometimes feel overwhelming, here are a few reasons why it's worth finding time for:

Building Skills And Confidence In The Kitchen

Cooking is more than just preparing food; it's a life skill. Think back to the first time you made something simple, like scrambled eggs, and how clumsy it felt. Over time, experimenting with new recipes and learning to balance flavors builds confidence and competence. Cooking at home can foster skills in meal planning, time management, and multitasking, which translate into greater organization in daily life (Widener et al., 2021). Each experience creating a meal from scratch contributes to your self-reliance and confidence.

Connecting with Culture & Tradition

Home cooking provides an opportunity to connect with cultural roots. Many people find that certain recipes evoke memories of family gatherings and cultural traditions. For instance, preparing a dish your grandmother used to make keeps family traditions alive, and strengthens a sense of identity (Brasier, 2022). Additionally, trying recipes from different cultures allows for exploration and appreciation of diversity. Cooking meals from various cuisines can be a way to experience different flavors and culinary traditions without leaving home, fostering both creativity and a global mindset.

Healthier Choices, Healthier You



We've all been there—it's late, you're hungry, and the drive-thru seems like the easiest solution. However, cooking at home gives you control over what goes into your meal, which can play an important role for your health. Cooking at home can help you avoid hidden ingredients that are sometimes added in restaurant dishes that often exceed daily recommended limits for sugar and sodium (Marchitelli et al., 2023). Furthermore, home-cooked meals tend to contain less sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats, which supports long-term health goals such as weight management or improving

energy levels (Mills et al., 2017). Cooking at home can give you control over your food, so that you can more easily choose fresh vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains instead of heavily processed options. For example, when you're craving pasta, you can toss in spinach, tomatoes, and grilled chicken, creating a more balanced and nourishing meal. Even on busy nights, preparing simple meals at home can lead to an overall healthier lifestyle.

Saving Money, One Meal At A Time

Frequently eating out can quickly add up financially. You start with a simple lunch order, then maybe a coffee a couple times per week, and suddenly your budget is tight. Cooking at home is one of the best ways to save money without sacrificing quality. According to a 2018 Forbes report, it is almost five times more expensive to order delivery from a restaurant than it is to cook at home. When funds are tight, home cooking becomes invaluable. Transforming random ingredients in your fridge into a stir-fry or soup is both economical and prevents food waste. Home cooking helps stretch your money while making the most out of available ingredients.

Food For The Soul

There's something comforting about cooking at home after a long day. Picture coming home, feeling mentally drained from back-to-back meetings and classes. Spending even 30 minutes in the kitchen chopping vegetables and stirring a pot can be a way to unwind and disconnect from the digital overload. Research highlights that cooking can help reduce stress and improve mood, making it a natural form of relaxation (Gabuaeva, 2018). Cooking can also bring people together. Instead of going out, inviting friends to cook a meal together transforms cooking into a shared experience. Whether cooking for yourself or others, it's a small act of care for both yourself and your loved ones.

Ultimately, home cooking isn't just about making food; it's about creating a healthier, more balanced, and connected life. While it may require extra time and effort, the benefits are considerable. Cooking at home promotes physical health, financial savings, and valuable life skills. It can also be a source of relaxation and a way to bond with others. Next time you're tempted to order takeout, remember that cooking at home is an investment in well-being, one that enhances daily life in countless ways.

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Health Article: Caffeine

University life is often a whirlwind of classes, deadlines, work, and late-night studying - making caffeine feel like that reliable friend you can count on. But have you considered how this stimulant impacts your mind and body over time? Understanding caffeine's effects can help you make informed choices for your productivity and health.



What Is Caffeine & How Does It Work?

Caffeine is a naturally occurring stimulant found in certain plants—including in coffee beans, tea leaves, and even in cacao pods (Harvard School of Public Health, 2020). Caffeine interacts with the body in a plethora of ways, affecting the central nervous system, immune system, digestive system, respiratory system, and urinary tract system (Kokot & Kratz, 2021). After consumption, caffeine is rapidly absorbed by the small intestine and metabolized in the liver (Kokot & Kratz, 2021). Caffeine then interacts with neurotransmitters in our brain, blocking the compound Adenosine: the chemical signal that tells our bodies when it's time to sleep. By binding to Adenosine receptors, caffeine keeps us feeling alert (Petre & Chin, 2021).

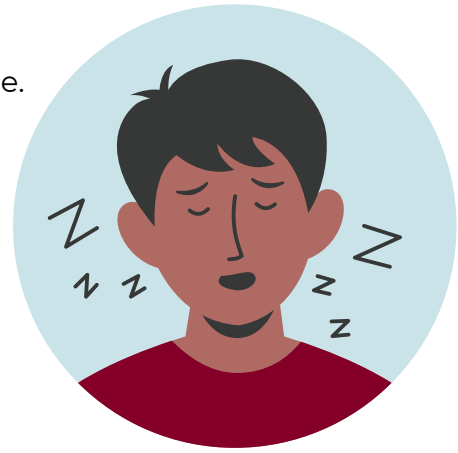
Effects on the Body & Mind

Research has suggested that caffeine may offer a number of health benefits including boosting our long-term memory and metabolism, as well as improving mood, focus, and reflexes (NeuroLaunch editorial team, 202; Hartney & Umhau, 2024). Studies have also suggested that caffeine can help reduce the risk of depression and has even been associated with a decreased risk of death (Hartney & Umhau, 2024).

That being said, excessive consumption (over 400 milligrams per day or about four cups of coffee) may lead to negative mental side effects. Caffeine can amplify feelings of nervousness and restlessness, as well as trigger/worsen anxiety and mood swings (Harvard School of Public Health, 2020).

Physically, caffeine can cause gastrointestinal discomfort such as an upset stomach or acid reflux. Caffeine can also disrupt our circadian rhythm if consumed later in the day, making it difficult to fall asleep and compromising sleep quality. Poor sleep affects memory, cognitive function and can impair emotional regulation - ultimately counteracting caffeine's benefits (Hatanaka & Felman, 2024). Furthermore, while caffeine can give you a temporary performance boost, the long-term effects are less predictable. Regular heavy caffeine use can lead to

dependency, where your system develops a tolerance. This means you would need increasing amounts to achieve the same effects over time, eventually reducing caffeine's effectiveness and leaving you feeling more fatigued (Meacham & Spritzler, 2023).



Tips For Healthy Consumption

Know Your Limits: The FDA recommended limit for caffeine is up to 400 milligrams per day. This is considered generally safe for most individuals, without significant negative health consequences in the short term. Most individuals will experience jitters or anxiety at this dose, so start small.

Timing Matters: Avoid caffeine late in the day. Effects can last six hours, disrupting sleep patterns if consumed too late.

Don't Rely on It: While caffeine can provide a quick energy boost, it's not a substitute for sleep, a balanced diet, and good study habits. Be mindful not to overload caffeine just to keep up with your workload.

Stay Hydrated & Relaxed: Caffeine is a diuretic and vasoconstrictor among other things. This can lead to unintended consequences over time, such as dehydration and higher blood pressure.

Caffeine & Health: A Delicate Balance

Caffeine can be a valuable tool for students under pressure, offering a boost to stay alert and focused. However, caffeine can carry negative mental and physical health risks—especially when consumed excessively. As you sip your tea or down an energy drink, listen to your body! Find out what works best for you by understanding how caffeine interacts with your body and mind, maximizing its benefits without compromising your health.

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