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**** Video and photos available for download: <http://bit.ly/32TEwdl>**

WELLNESS CHECKLIST HELPS NEW STUDENTS START COLLEGE ON HEALTHY FOOTING

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Many of the 20 million new students starting college this fall will have to manage their health and well-being on their own for the first time. As families review materials related to classes, meals and housing, [The Ohio State University Chief Wellness Officer](#) and [The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center](#) have created a wellness checklist to help students develop a plan to maintain their well-being.

“Learning how to independently monitor and prioritize personal wellness needs for the first time can be tricky,” said [Bernadette Melnyk](#), chief wellness officer and dean of the [College of Nursing](#) at [The Ohio State University](#). “Building a plan that is achievable and practical before you come to campus can really help with the transition to this new stage in life.”

The freshman wellness checklist covers exercise, healthy eating, stress management, organization, and mental and physical health. It includes resources students should seek out when they arrive on campus, such as fitness facilities, student health and mental wellness resources.

“Taking these steps early will really place students in a positive position as they begin their college experience,” Melnyk said. “These are transformative years in a person’s life, and this checklist will help support the growth and potential of every student from day one.”

Parents and students can review the following checklist and revisit it during the school year to support a healthy lifestyle while at school:

- **Establish Healthy Habits** - Just like you schedule your classes, schedule time for physical activity (at least 30 minutes of exercise five times a week), healthy eating, stress relief and at least seven hours of sleep every night. When you map out where your classes are on campus, also find your way to the places that will help you keep those healthy habits like the gym, a dining facility with healthy options and the student health center.
- **Find Local Health Care** - Get connected with a primary care nurse practitioner or physician and the nearest pharmacy. This is especially important for students who come to school with a chronic health condition, but every student could inevitably face a health challenge and should be prepared. Be sure to understand your insurance coverage before accessing care.
- **Make Your Mental Health a Priority** - The pressures of school and new surroundings can be nerve-wracking for students. Stress, depression and anxiety are growing mental health challenges among college students. Getting involved in campus organizations helps you to start making friends right away and can go a long way toward reducing stress. If you’re feeling overwhelmed and it’s interfering with functioning, don’t wait to seek professional help.

- **Find a System that Works for You** - Whether it's scheduling workouts and healthcare appointments alongside your classwork in a planner or using apps on your phone to remind you to take medication, find a way to stay organized and proactive about your health and well-being.

The wellness checklist is available at <https://go.osu.edu/wellnesschecklist>.

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