

Barbelle Interview: Nutritionist Sneag

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Our society is obsessed. Everywhere we go, we are bombarded with messages about health. What we should do, what we shouldn't do, what we can never ever, ever do. Sometimes it seems that we are prodded and poked and given different advice from every source. To set the record straight, I journeyed over to Barnard Health Services to interview our very own Barnard nutritionist, Tara Ostrowe Sneag. She offers tips and real answers so that every Barnard girl can be her healthiest.



Nutritionist Sneag

1. What is the best way for a busy Barnard student to make herself healthier?

It is important to have balanced meals and ensure that you're eating regularly and throughout the day. Make sure to consume starch, veggies, protein, and healthy fat. Eat at least three servings of healthy fruit a day. Also, be sure to engage in regular exercise, even if it is just a brisk walk each day. Stay well hydrated—many headaches and instances of cramping and dizziness are caused by dehydration. Learn to manage stress better. Allow time to relax and decompress. Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

2. How can we make the most of 20 minutes at the gym?

Interval training is great.

I recommend increasing the intensity and then decreasing the intensity of your workouts to optimize your results. You should do calisthenics—squats, pushups, and crunches in your room later on. Allow for stretching before and after your exercise regiments. Stretching is a great way to relieve stress and energize to get the blood flowing. Keep an exercise mat in your room and do extra stretching in the morning and at night. On the days that you can't do cardio, use circuit machines for weight training; try to work out all of the parts of your body. Ideally, aim to do cardio 5 days a week and circuit training 2 days per week.

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3. How much water should we drink daily?

You should drink 25-30 cc per kg of body weight. There are 240 cc in one cup. This translates into about 8 cups of water for an 150-160-pound person. This recommendation varies with activity and heat. I recommend monitoring your urine to decide how much water you need. In general, if it is yellow, you are past dehydration. It should be clear. Also, if you are thirsty, you are past the point of dehydration.

4. Is it better to eat three square meals or several small ones?

It is better to eat several small meals. Doing so increases your metabolism and fuels your body throughout the day. It prevents bloating and gastrointestinal distress. It helps people realize their hunger signals. Smaller, more frequent meals could help prevent peaks and lows of sugar levels throughout the day.

5. Is it bad to eat late?

Eating a big meal right before going to bed is not ideal. You must allow 2-3 hours of digestion time before lying down; failure to do so may lead to acid reflux. Eating a light snack if you are up late studying, however, is fine.