

Caffeine's kick isn't worth the hype

Its health effects can work against studying students

By Chad Lorenz
Staff Reporter

Students may think they need the extra boost that caffeine provides during finals week, but university health officials warn them to beware of its effects.

Many students use caffeine products the night before tests so they can stay up late to study. But Dave Bower, health center drug and alcohol education coordinator, said students always weren't aware of the effects of taking caffeine.

"I don't think they consider the dangers," he said.

Caffeine can cause insomnia, headaches, upset stomach, dizziness, nervousness and mood changes, he said.

Jennifer Johnson, a senior political science major, said she once took NoDoz, an over-the-counter caffeine pill, to study late into the night. She said she had a headache and felt jittery and nervous the next morning.

"I'll never do it again," Johnson said.

She plans to use her time better for finals this semester, she said, by preparing for them one at a time.

Jeremy Hahn, a freshman civil engineering major, said he once used Vivarin the night before two tests.

He wasn't able to study very well, he said, because he took more than the recommended dose.

"I was wired," Hahn said. "I was bouncing off the walls all night."

But, he said he was tired the next day during his test and didn't think the test went well.

He said he would distribute his time better during finals this year.

Kayla Dulaney, a senior nursing student, said she crammed

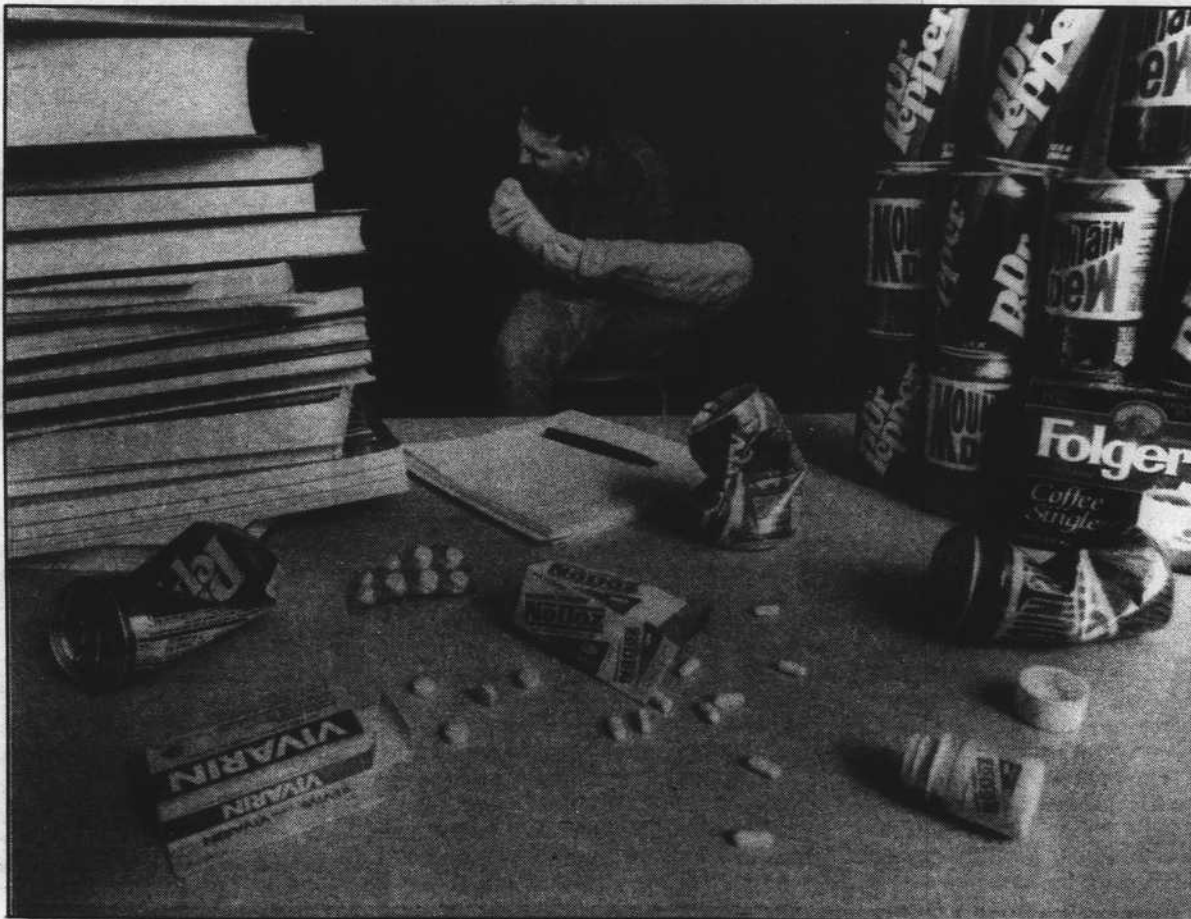


Photo illustration by Michelle Paulman

When the stress of studying takes its toll, many students turn to caffeine to give them a lift.

during past finals weeks so she could retain more information closer to test time.

But this semester, she said, she plans to study the bulk of the material during dead week and review every night during finals week.

Too much caffeine has left her nervous and jittery in the past, she said. She wouldn't recommend it, but, she said, some students use it as a last resort.

Bower said caffeine's effects vary in each individual. Serious medical problems can develop in pregnant women, elderly people, people with heart conditions and individuals on medication, Bower said.

About 250 milligrams will

generally kick in side effects, he said. NoDoz caffeine pills contain 100 milligrams of caffeine, and Vivarin has 200 milligrams.

A can of Mountain Dew has 55 milligrams of caffeine, one of the highest contents in soft drinks. Jolt has the most with 100 milligrams, he said.

Different types of coffees range from 100 to 125 milligrams of caffeine, he said.

Pat Harley, a staff pharmacist at the University Health Center, said Ephedrine Hydrochloride — sold under brand names such as Max Alert, Up Time, Mini Slims — was another stimulant being marketed for inducing insomnia.

Ephedrine, available over the counter, was being abused to give a high, she said.

The drug is intended to relieve asthma symptoms and fight low blood pressure, she said. It constricts blood vessels, increases heart rate and relaxes bronchial tubes in the lungs, Harley said.

A December public service bulletin issued by the Neighborhood Watch Association referred to Ephedrine HCL as "over-the-counter speed."

The drug could cause seizures, convulsions, nausea, irregular heart beat, high blood pressure, dizziness and headaches, the bulletin stated.

Harley said some companies were pulling Ephedrine off the shelves because of the dangers from misuse.

Graduation to be held on Dec. 17

From Staff Reports

UNL's December commencement exercises will be Dec. 17 at 9:30 a.m. in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Chancellor Graham Spanier will preside over the ceremony, in which about 1,400 students will receive degrees. David Powers, executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, will give the commencement address.

Saburo Nakagura, president of the Graduate University of Advanced Studies in Yokohama, Japan, and one of Japan's most prominent scientists, will receive an honorary doctor of science degree.

Special seating will be reserved for guests with disabilities. Golf carts will be located on the ramps on the exterior north and south sides of the building to help disabled guests enter and exit the building. Guests with disabilities should enter the Devaney Center grounds via the 14th Street entrance and proceed to the north side of the building.

Sign language interpreters will be located in section B-12 on the west side of the concourse level. Guests in wheelchairs will be seated on the northeast corner of the arena floor.

Post office will stay open later during holidays

From Staff Reports

The U.S. Postal Service has extended the hours of its window to meet the high demand from customers during the holidays.

Beginning Dec. 10 through Dec. 23, the following stations have expanded Christmas hours:

• Main Post Office at 700 R St., Mondays through Fridays, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• Station A at 110 N. 35th St., Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• Indian Village at 1201 Calvert St., Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• Gateway Station at 5945 R St., Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• College View Station at 5100 Van Dorn St., Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Postal Service is also providing additional service by visiting retirement centers. Employees will sell stamps and accept Christmas cards and packages from residents.

Center

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"It has created a morale problem," Tadros said. "It has resulted in the center not being as productive as in previous years. It has caused the faculty to lose confidence (in the college)."

The college is supposed to provide matching funds to grants the center receives, Tadros said. But with its rapid growth, it has received more grants than the college will support.

Tadros said the center must honor the commitments to its external sponsors, and they now say any new research proposals must come with approval from the engineering dean's office.

But administrators are not saying they would help the center as it slips further into debt, Tadros said.

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