

CHEERS TO GOLD & BLUE

Bronze or Burn:
The Ins and Outs of
Tanning in 2024
Salisbury - Pg. 22

The Story Behind
Choate's Water Supply
Kahu - Pg. 10



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Fighting the Flu

By Eliza O'Neill '27

As flu season approaches, Choate's Health Center is taking proactive steps to ensure the health of the student body by organizing flu vaccine clinics. The first clinic took place Tuesday, September 17 in the Bay Room, with another planned for this fall. Here's what you need to know about the upcoming clinic!

These clinics aim to offer accessible opportunities for anyone on campus aged four and above to get vaccinated and help reduce the spread of the flu. Though the shot may not offer 100% protection, Karen Klein, Director of Nursing at the Health Center, emphasizes that it remains a crucial defense against flu strains such as H1N1, H3N2, and B/Victoria lineage virus. The effectiveness of the

vaccine varies each year depending on how well it matches the circulating strain, but even so, the vaccine still offers significant benefits. Ms. Klein referred to a calculation from Yale Professor Allison Gulvani, which found that flu vaccines with just 20% effectiveness can prevent 21 million infections. That means that if 43% of the population received the vaccine, it could save 61,000 lives annually. Ms. Klein stressed the importance of high community uptake, noting that the vaccine not only helps protect individuals but even those that are more vulnerable by reducing the severity of symptoms and curbing the spread within the community.

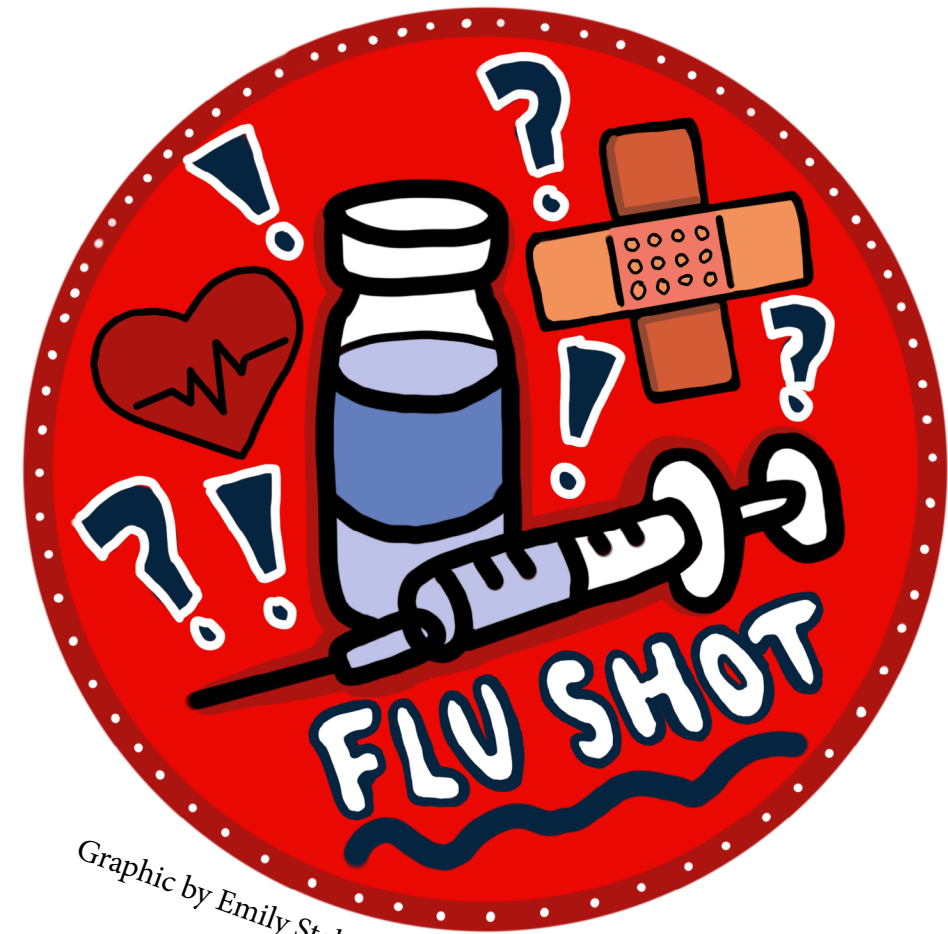
It is important to note that the vaccines administered will be injectable - no nasal

spray vaccines will be available. Griffin Hospital, a highly respectable and professional service, runs numerous vaccination programs across Connecticut and will oversee and administer the vaccines. Their philosophy of putting patients at the center of care is reflected by their strict adherence to all safety and hygiene protocols during vaccine administration.

Dates, times, and locations for upcoming clinics will be communicated through Boarcast, the student portal, and QR codes posted around campus. To receive the vaccine, students under 18 must bring a consent form signed by a parent and a copy of their insurance card. Insurance will cover the cost, ensuring the clinics are accessible to all.

For students hesitant about getting vaccinated, Ms. Klein and the Health Center staff offer a compelling reminder:

even a partially effective flu shot can save lives. Getting the flu vaccine is a key step toward maintaining personal health and supporting the entire Choate community.



Graphic by Emily Stahura '26

Let's Give the Beauty Industry a Makeover

By Maya Salisbury '26

As we continue to grow and develop as a world, we ought to focus more of our attention on rectifying the issues that come with the beauty industry, arguably one of the most physically and mentally toxic industries in the world. Ingredients like talc, phthalates, and

parabens are fill the ingredient lists of numerous popular cosmetic products globally.

These ingredients have been proven to lead to an increased number of otherwise healthy women experiencing reproductive health issues and hormonal cancers. One specific example of these harmful ingredients is talc. In its natural form, talc contains talc asbestos, a known carcinogen. Meaning, if inhaled in excess, it can lead to health-related lung issues. It is vital that brands shift their attention to ensuring that they are using asbestos-free talc or finding a replacement for the ingredient so as not to expose our lungs to unnecessary harm.

Thanks to the leadership of Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.), Congress is inching closer to directing the FDA to review and, if necessary, ban or restrict dangerous chemicals and contaminants to ensure that these everyday products are safe.

Besides the adverse health effects of the growing beauty industry, there is a serious claim to be made about the damaging physiological effects that the marketing of these brands is having on young teens and girls. With brands like Drunk Elephant targeting a young clientele, more and more young kids are using products like retinol and salicylic acid serums, which can desensitize their skin and cause long-term damage. By masking powerful chemicals with pretty packaging, children are not able to fully understand the effects of what they are purchasing.

Not only that, but by normalizing the use of makeup so much we are effectively stripping ourselves of appreciating our natural beauty. Though this sounds cliché it has been proven. In studies like Cash & Cash's (1982) study; "Women's Use of Cosmetics," they found that public self-consciousness is positively related to cosmetic use. Because many women who lack self-esteem are also self-conscious, it makes sense that adornments are used to blend into a world of beauty these self-conscious women do not fit into (Cash & Cash, 1982). One 2010 New York Times article summarized the findings of a then-new study with, "Beauty products make women feel ugly" By using products are could be causing us harm, makeup could be doing us more harm than good. Especially in tandem with a popularization of makeup and skincare in younger and younger age groups, this has serious ramifications for the self-confidence of

girls as young as elementary school, who base their self worth and confidence on beauty brands that profit off of insecurities.

In summary, the beauty industry needs a serious makeover, to make it safer for our bodies and our minds. But as for changes, we can make now, buying talc-free products, using gentle skin care products without strong exfoliants, and focusing on having a healthy skin barrier.

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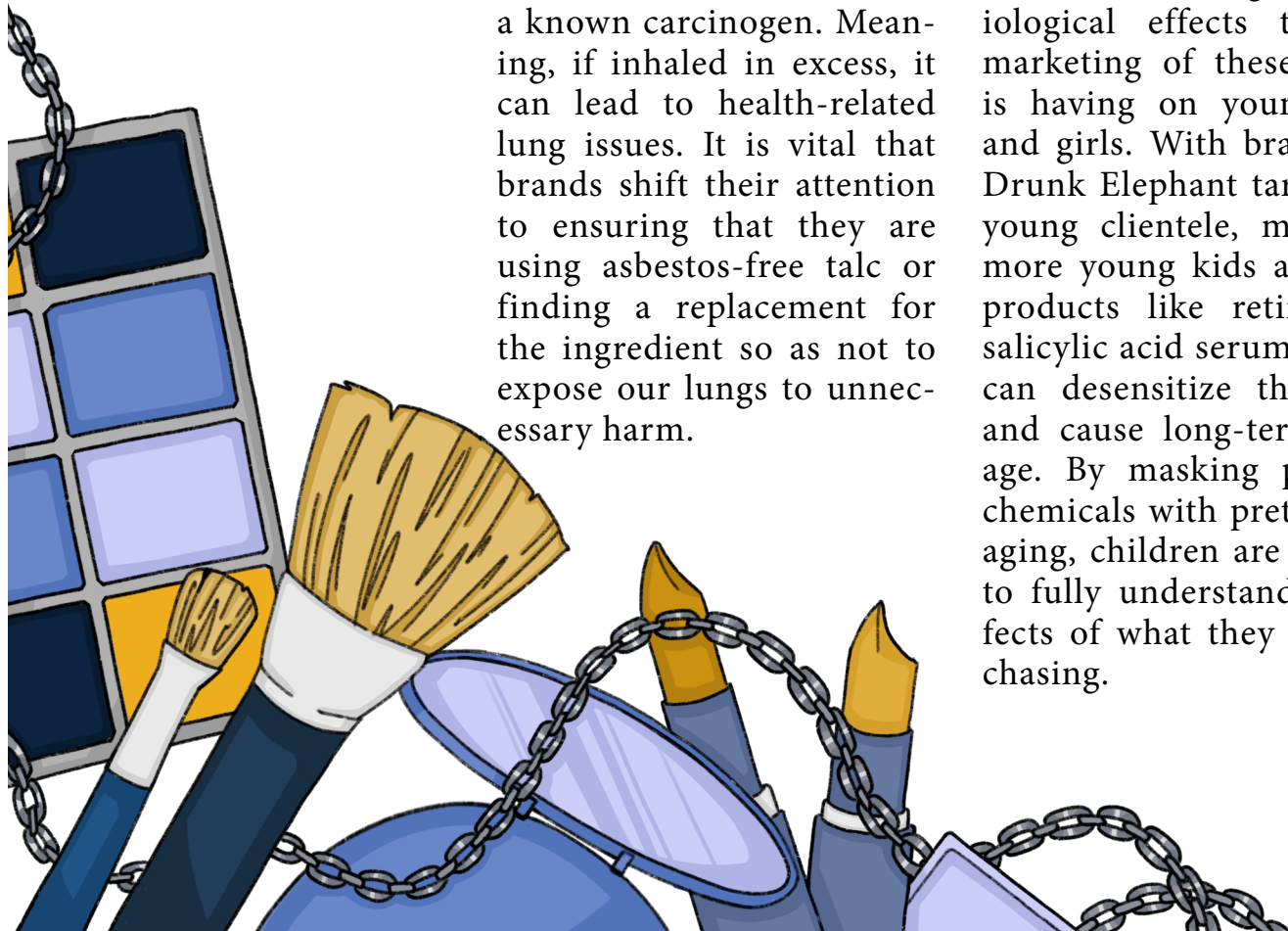
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Graphic by Leah Han '27

Monkeypox: An Imminent Pandemic?

By Neil Alejandro '27

If you have recently turned on the news, you may have become aware of Monkeypox, or at least of its outbreaks across the globe. Mpox, formerly known as Monkeypox, is a disease caused by the Monkeypox virus, or MPXV.¹ It was declared a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) on August 14th, 2024.⁶

cern by the World Health Organization (WHO) on August 14th, 2024.⁶

It is a zoonotic disease, meaning that it can spread between humans and animals. Mpox is endemic to parts of Central and West Africa in

both people and animals, such as small rodents, monkeys, and other mammals. The Democratic Republic of the Congo. There are two types, or clades, of the Mpox virus. Clade I is responsible for the more recent outbreaks. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), this clade has historically caused more severe

caused global outbreaks back in 2022. It has a much lower mortality rate at about 0.1%.¹ Despite the recent increase in news coverage of the disease, Mpox is not new. It was first discovered in 1958 in monkeys kept for research, and the first human case was recorded in 1970. Symptoms include fever, headache, chills, rashes, and mucosal lesions which can last two to four weeks.³

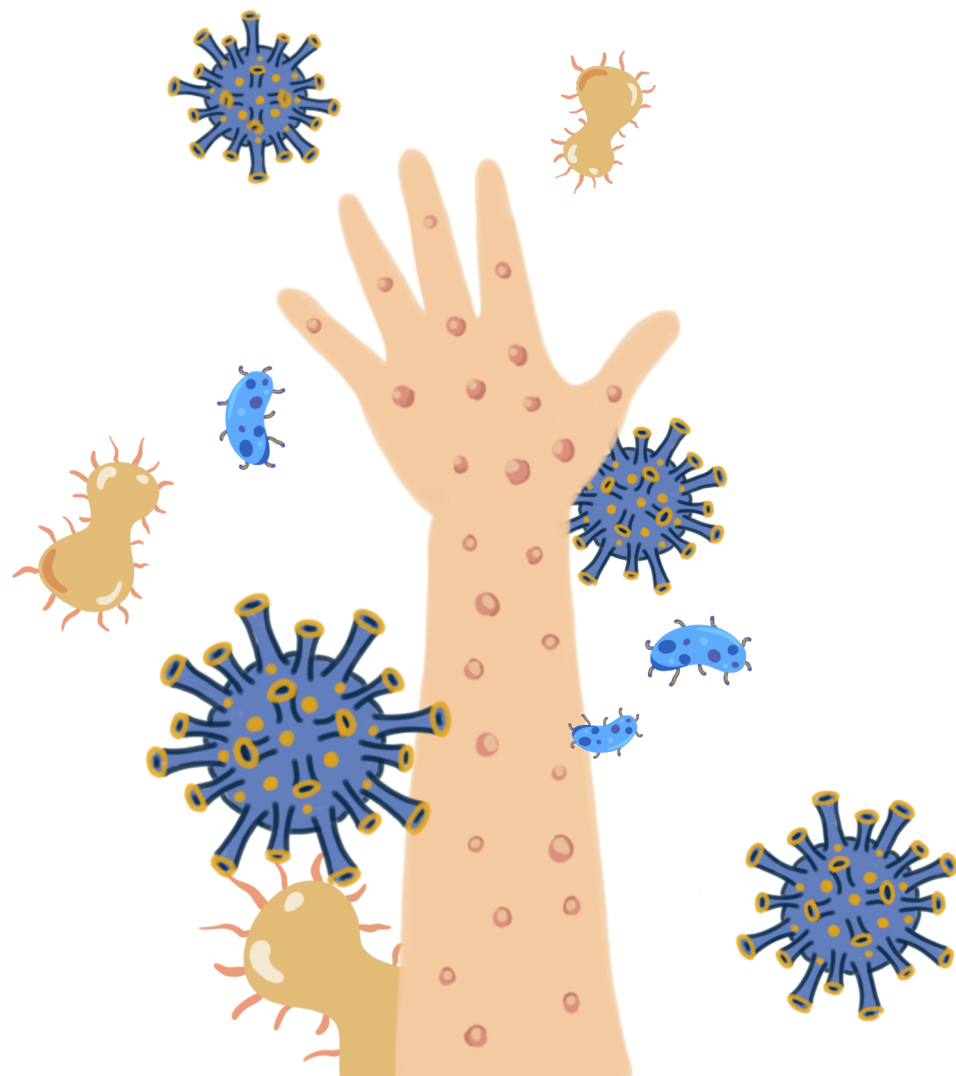
In a post-Covid world, speculation about Mpox starting a pandemic has arisen. However, the chances of this becoming a reality are extremely low. Mpox is spread through prolonged direct contact with Monkeypox rashes, scabs, and bodily fluids from an infected person, or with materials and surfaces contaminated with the virus.² Covid-19, however, is transmitted much more efficiently. Contrary to Mpox, COVID-19 is a respiratory virus, meaning it can spread through tiny droplets released when breathing that can be suspended in the air for hours.⁴ This causes Covid-19 to be significantly more contagious than Mpox. Also, due to Mpox being de-

causes old, there is already a vaccine that is developed, safe to use, effective, and approved for distribution and use on those who have been exposed.⁵ On the other hand, Covid-19 was a novel virus, being discovered less than a year prior to the official declaration of the pandemic. Vaccines were not yet created to combat the illness, a primary reason Covid-19 became a global pandemic. Thus, the likelihood of Mpox causing another pandemic is incredibly low.

Although Mpox may seem scary, there is no need to worry about another pandemic. Despite the similarities with Covid-19, there are many key differences that make another pandemic unlikely to occur. Scientists know much more about the Mpox virus than COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic, vaccines are ready for use, and the spread of Mpox is much more harder than COVID-19. The world has learned its lessons from COVID-19 and the same mistakes will hopefully and likely not be made again.

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Graphic by Maddie Childs '26

The Story Behind Choate's Water Supply

By Lois Kahu '26

Water at Choate has recently been a topic at the forefront of student conversations and the subject of many student and administration-run initiatives. While students often discuss the importance of water fountains in dorms and the relative taste/quality of water from different sources, discussions stay on the surface level. Today I want to go deep into where exactly Choate's water comes from and dispel any misconceptions about water quality at Choate.

The current water Choate receives comes from the town of Wallingford. Wallingford Water Division provides water to about 88% of the town's population. According to their 2023 water quality report, "About 95% of the supply originates from four surface water reservoirs in Wallingford, Durham, and Guilford with watersheds extending into Meriden and North Branford."¹ This water collects precipitation from surrounding areas and, after treatment, becomes the source of drinking water for the Wallingford communities. Water quality concerns arise when the water runs off to the reservoir. As it trav-

els, it can pick up harmful substances and radioactive material that may aggravate human bodily systems: "Contaminants that may be present in source water include: microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife."¹ Luckily, Wallingford exceeds the standards required by environmental protection agencies' guidelines. The water at Pistapaug Water Treatment Plant undergoes a "clarification process and mixed media filters to remove finely suspended particles and microbial contaminants." So, Choate water is safe to drink and follows all guidelines, but is it really accessible to all students?

When we think about Choate water, it is essential to ask the question, are Choate students satisfied with the water? Because the students are the ones living with this water, we must ask for their opinions, see what their thoughts are, and try to take action for them.

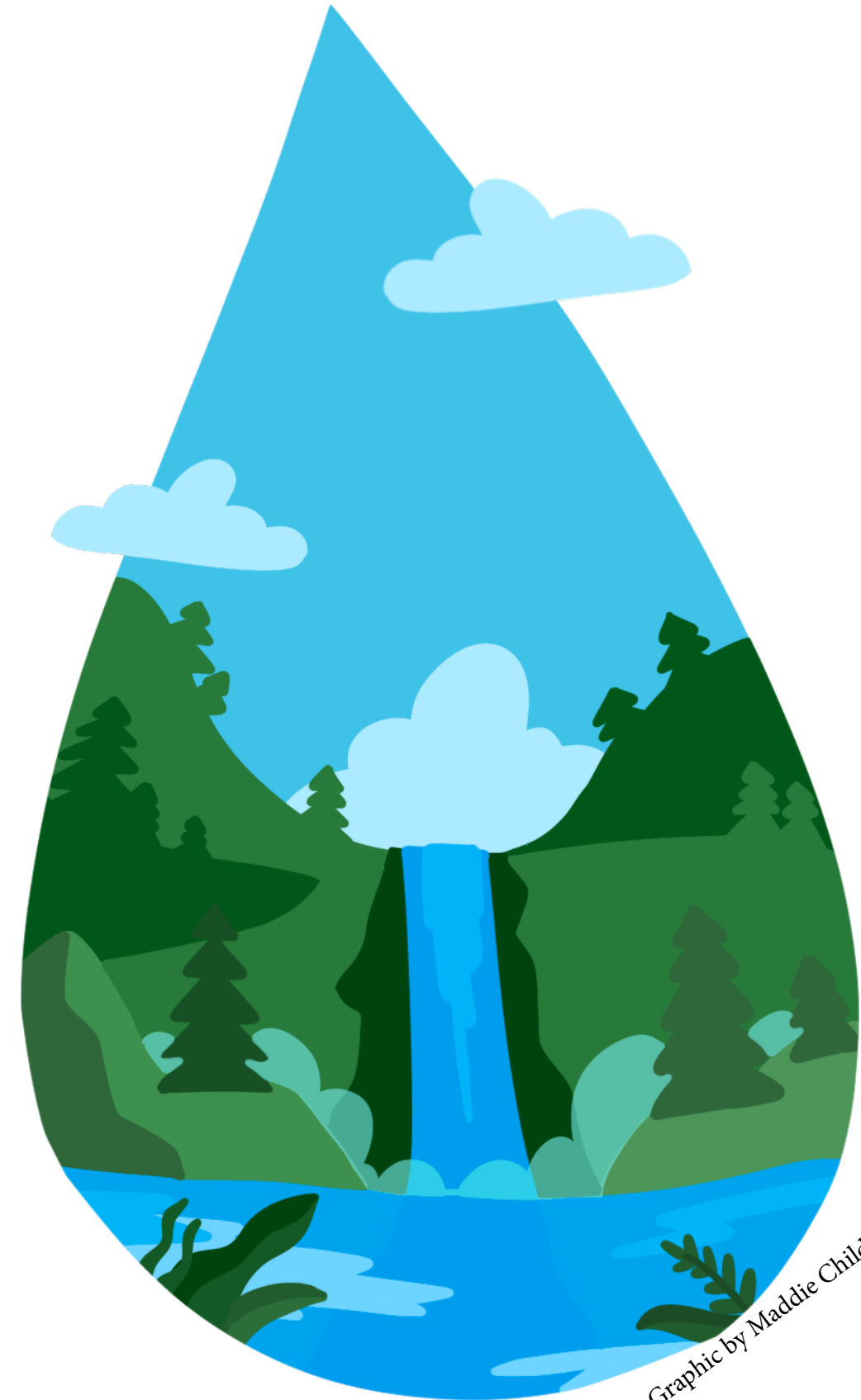
When in conversation with a Bernard resident, they revealed that since there was no water fountain, the whole

dorm had to make use of one student's Brita filter. They only had one other alternative which was sink water, which meant about 40 students were relying on one source. Conversations with other students revealed that they feel neglected as they believe that Choate doesn't think the issue of their drinking water is a big enough priority. How can we minimize our use of materials that will contribute to climate change; if we don't provide our students with the resources that will help them fight that change along with us? Choate is forcing its students into a tight corner, one in which the usage of plastic water bottles might be their only way out.

In order to reach the goal of a sustainable community, Choate needs to start creating access and attainability with its water for its students.

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Graphic by Maddie Childs '26

Sleep Supplements: BS or Best Sleep?

By Erin Kim '26'

Sleep Supplements are among the most used types of supplements in the United States, with at least one in twelve people using them.⁶ In fact, according to the CDC, over 3 million Americans use a type of sleep supplement, and a study done in 2020 shows that 8.4% of adults took sleep

medication in the last 30 days, either every day or most days to help them fall or stay asleep.

Most sleep supplements contain melatonin, a hormone involved in our sleep cycle.

Melatonin is a hormone in the body produced by the pineal gland, a tiny gland in the brain. The pineal gland is part of the endocrine system, which is the system that releases hormones in the body.² The pineal gland releases high melatonin levels when it is dark out and decreases melatonin production during the day. In other words, you have the highest amount

of melatonin at night. The longer the night, the longer the pineal gland produces melatonin. This is the reason why melatonin is often referred to as the sleep hormone when, in fact, it isn't essential for sleeping; it just creates a better sleep experience if there are high levels of melatonin in one's system.

People who lean toward taking sleep supplements stay up late with lights on, such as phones, TVs, and any light. This is because the pineal gland receives information about the daily light-dark cycle from the retinas in your eyes and then releases melatonin accordingly, which is also a reason why most blind people have insomnia.

Though melatonin is a hormone produced by the human body, it can also be made synthetically, and it is most commonly found in the form of a pill capsule or a gummy candy. When the melatonin is digested, extra melatonin enters your system, making the body tired and sleepy.

Though melatonin is a commonly used sleep supplement, there are side effects. The most common side effect of melatonin gummies or pills is feeling drowsy or tired the day.⁴ Other side effects include dizziness, nausea, and even increased dreams. When you're sleeping, melatonin also releases vasotocin, a protein that regulates REM sleep; increasing melatonin may lead to higher levels of vasotocin — therefore, more REM sleep and potentially vivid dreams.

At Choate, many students stay up late on their devices, resulting in irregular sleep schedules and melatonin production. As a result,

many students choose to take sleep supplements to maximize their short sleep time and “correct” their sleep schedules. This does more harm than good. Maya Garman '26', says she has become more reliant on melatonin when taking it regularly. She says that she's more tired and exhausted the next day, which results in her inability to focus in class the next day. Some students refuse to take melatonin due to its reliant factors and next-day effects. Though melatonin is proven to enhance sleep, it should not be taken regularly and become a supplement that students should rely on.

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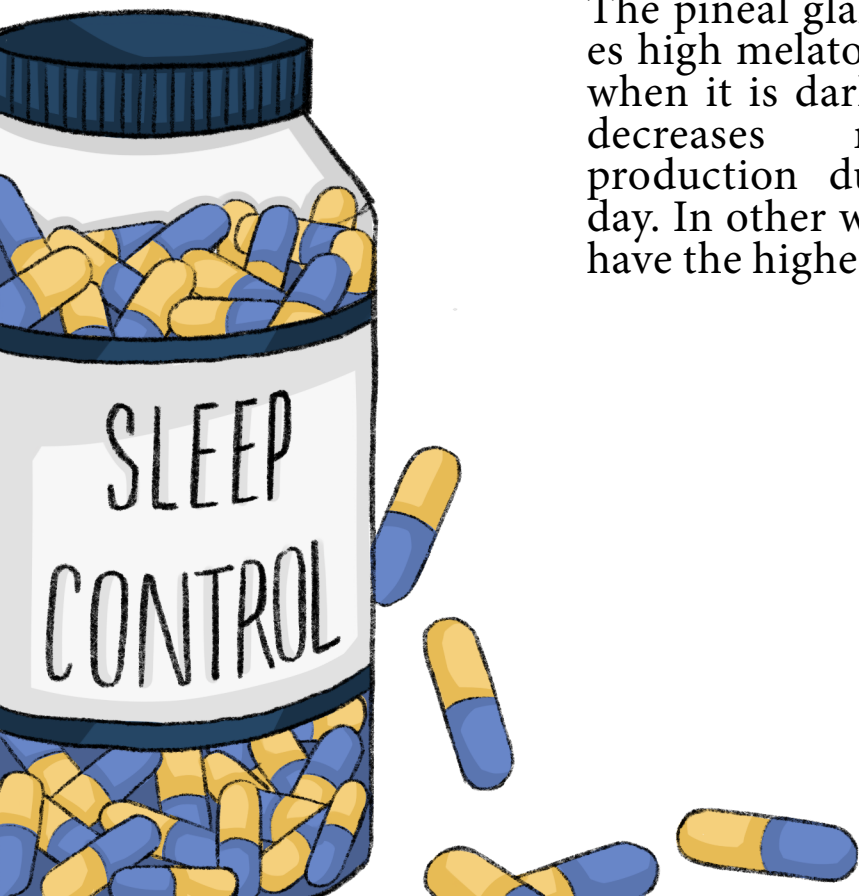
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Graphic by Leah Han '27

Beyond the Health Center: Out-of-School Appointments

By Brianna Heckle 26'

The average American visits the doctor four times a year. While many of these appointments are planned, unexpected injuries and illnesses can occur. With students balancing packed schedules full of classes, practices, and clubs, getting sick or injured is almost inevitable. Some students may also have healthcare needs that require specialized care. Although the Health Center can typically provide necessary treatment, there are certain circumstances when outside intervention is needed. In such

cases, Choate is committed to ensuring students' healthcare needs are met on and off campus.

The Health Center offers a variety of services, including COVID-19 and flu testing, mental health counseling, and the monitoring of ill patients. When asked about the most common reasons for out-of-school appointments, Dr. Meredith McNamara, Choate's medical director, shared, "We coordinate for subspecialized care; orthopedics is a big one. We send a lot of students out for X-rays and MRIs. We can also

coordinate to send students out for other subspecialized care like cardiology or pulmonology."

The Health Center usually recommends appointments and then handles scheduling and contacting the provider. However, Dr. McNamara notes, "Students and families sometimes prefer to schedule them themselves. We have great relationships with lots of different subspecialists in the greater New Haven area, and we rely on these relationships to help service our students." Once the appointment is set, students are transported in

school vehicles. In more urgent cases where a student isn't stable, they may also be transported by ambulance.

Laveenya Seenivasagam '27 experienced this process when she injured her knee while playing squash, overstraining her meniscus. The school brought her to Ortho-Ouch, where she received an MRI. Reflecting on the experience, she shared that "The Health Center did everything for me. They had all my appointments scheduled. It was so easy and convenient." She is now fully recovered and back to playing squash.

Choate requires

that all students have U.S.-based health insurance. Choate also provides a school-based policy for those who have insurance that doesn't apply to the US. This helps cover part of the cost if a student is required to be seen outside the health center.

After students are seen by specialists, the Health Center can usually work with them to implement the specialist's recommended treatment plan. If the specialist thinks the student would benefit from a follow-up appointment, the Health Center would then set up another appointment for the student, but this is done on a case-by-case basis. Dr. McNamara says, "Our

understanding of general medical care makes it easy to collaborate with other medical professionals."

Choate remains dedicated to meeting the healthcare needs of its students, wherever that may be. For further questions, email mcnamaram@choate.edu or drop by the Health Center.

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Navigating Covid-19: Protocols on Campus

By Ha Jin Sung '28'

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic urged Choate's health services to establish protocols to prevent the virus from affecting school life. Prior to this school year, students had to isolate for five days if they contracted COVID-19. Despite controlling the spread of the virus, this protocol caused students to miss out on key school activities. When isolating, students had to take classes remotely and missed out on sports practices, music ensemble rehearsals, and more. Choate's health center has implemented new protocols to ensure safety and health given these new circumstances.

The COVID-19 isolation protocol at Choate changed in the spring term of the 2023-2024 academic year, notes the Health Center's Head Nurse Ryan Rod-

dy in an interview. Students were no longer required to spend five days isolating in the health center or off campus. Instead, students showing symptoms of COVID-19 would stay at the health center and would be allowed to return to a normal schedule after remaining fever-free for 24 hours.

Choate's Director of Nursing, Dr. Karen Klein, emphasized how Choate closely follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for COVID-19 and similar respiratory diseases. The CDC's previous COVID-19 guideline was a minimum isolation period of five days and a period of precautions after isolation and symptoms lessened. However, as effective vaccines and treatments have emerged, the isolation policies are no longer strongly en-

forced. Dr. Klein highlighted that important measures to implement in the Choate community include washing hands, getting rest, going to the health center if students are not feeling well, and masking. Choate is planning to offer a COVID-19 clinic in the near future, similar to the flu clinics. Although isolation is no longer required, students are encouraged to rest and recover if they are not feeling well, and staying at the health center is always an option for students.

The isolation protocols have been lifted especially as many more students and faculty are now vaccinated against Covid. "The motto in the health center is "Take care of yourself, take care of each other," explained Dr. Klein. The motto represents how we should take care of ourselves if

we are not feeling well, which in turn will protect the larger community. If members of the Choate community are mindful of themselves when they have symptoms of COVID-19 or similar illnesses, and take precautions such as wearing a mask or not sharing food, students can participate fully in classes and school activities.

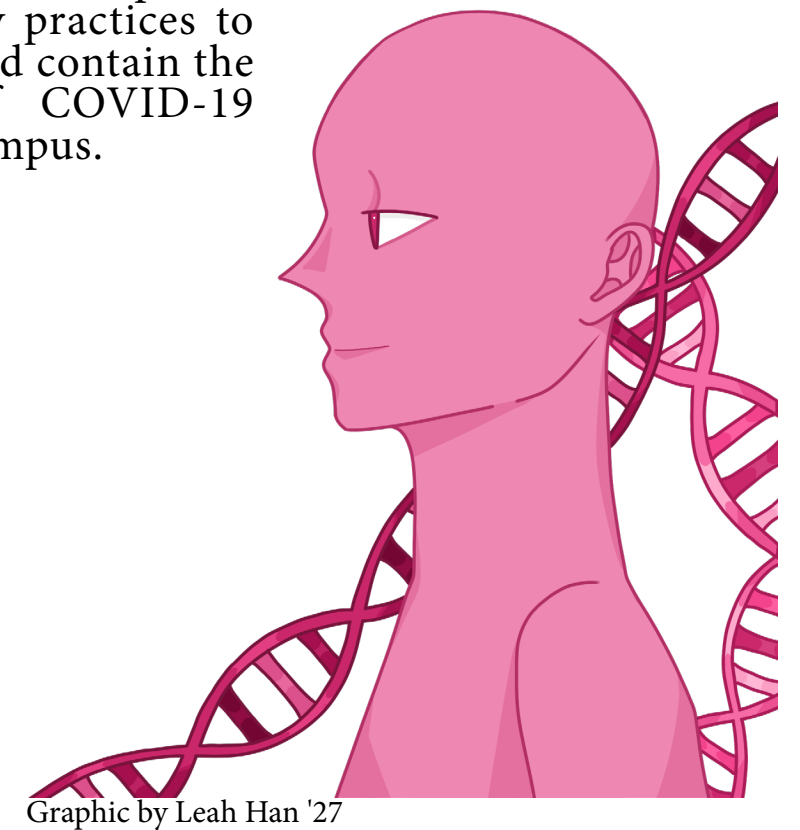
Theater arts faculty Ms. Deighna DeRiu believes that the lift of the isolation protocol is a completely fine change, as long as people continue to mask and get proper rest if they have symptoms. For Sophie Eliades '27, no longer having to isolate for five days brings on slight anxiety. For people who are "immunocompromised, it would be really bad for them to get COVID," she expressed. Cait Ahn '25 noted that while she did not mind

the protocol too much when it was in use, no longer having to isolate was "convenient," especially as students don't have to miss school activities or sports practices.

Both Nurse Roddy and Dr. Klein express that the current policy is likely one that Choate will stick to for at least a while, with an emphasis on healthy practices to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 around campus.

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Graphic by Leah Han '27

Sugars Effect on the Teen Body

By Erin Kim '26

Amid high school students scrambling to complete assignments and partake in various extracurriculars, the importance of mental health and a healthy body is often lost. It is very common for students to stay up late for assignments or upcoming tests. To stay up for more than 15 hours each day is hard for any teenager, and as a result, most students turn to sugary energy drinks and snacks to stay awake and alert. The bag of candy sitting on the desk or the piled-up cans of Red Bull sitting in the recycling bin contain alarming amounts of sugar, only a fraction of which should be consumed daily. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, teenagers and young kids should consume less than 25 grams of sugar daily. Also, it is recommended that sugary beverages should be limited to no more than eight ounces per week. Sugary drinks are a significant contributor to the obesity epidemic, and a 20-ounce bottle of soda can include upwards of 16 teaspoons of added sugar (79 grams).² A single can of Red Bull contains 27 grams of sugar, which is two whole grams of sugar more than the recommended daily intake for a teenager.

At the moment, students

might not be too concerned about the effects of sugar on their growing bodies. As teenagers, the expectation is to eat to grow and perform at the highest ability at school, but being aware of sugar consumption is also important for young students to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The main effects of an imbalance in sugar consumption include heart disease, addictive behaviors, and memory deficiencies.

According to Harvard Health Publishing, in a study published by JAMA Internal Medicine, Dr. Hu found that those who have a high-sugar diet have a greater risk of dying from heart disease. Over a 15-year study, he found that people who attained 17-21% of their calories from added sugar had a 38% chance of dying from cardiovascular diseases compared to those who consumed only 8% of their calories from added sugar.³ Essentially, heart disease originates from high blood pressure and an immoderate amount of cholesterol, which causes an imbalance in LDL levels. High sugar levels in the bloodstream can lead to atherosclerosis, a condition with a buildup of fatty material in blood vessels, causing them to narrow and increase pressure.¹ High

LDL, or an unbalanced LDL (low-density lipoprotein increases), comes from an imbalance of cholesterol, which is affected by the sugar intake. Eric Ascher, a family medicine physician at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, stated, "Diets high in sugar cause the liver to create more LDL, which can result in a risk of heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and more."⁴

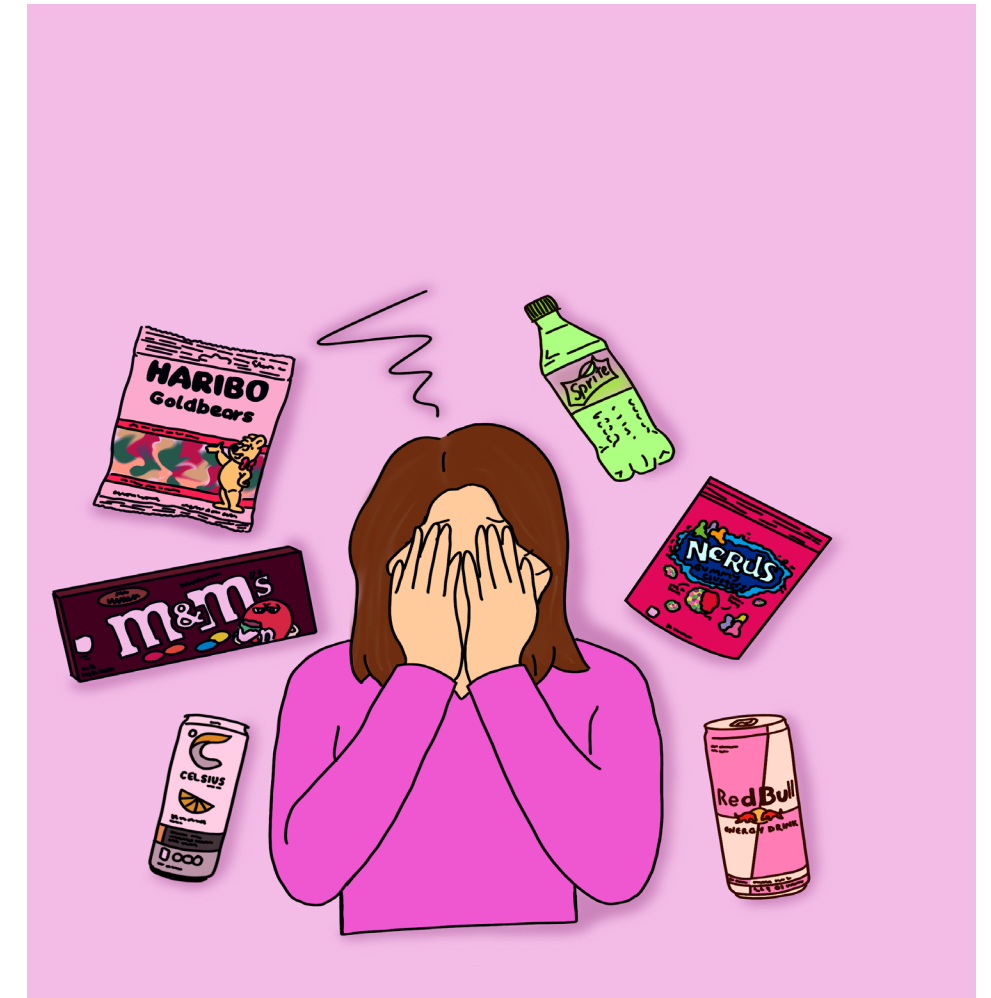
Addictive behaviors have also been proven to be a result of an overconsumption of sugar. The brain uses energy in the form of glucose to produce energy through cellular activities such as cellular respiration. However, too much glucose from a high-sugar diet can result in an excess of it in the brain. According to the Texas Institute for Neurological Disorders, an excess of glucose in the brain affects certain neurotransmitters, which can result in sugar addictions. This effect of the neurotransmitter starts with a disruption of dopamine levels in the brain.⁶ Dopamine is a neurotransmitter in the brain that controls mood, behavior, and memory. Sugar can disrupt the neurotransmitters because as the brain gets more accommodated to the high levels of sugar levels, it slowly starts to depend on it;

as a result, when trying to eliminate it from the diet, it can affect the mood and behavior of some individuals. The brain depends on sugar, which is why sugar is addictive and hard to eliminate from many diets. The brain is particularly important for teenagers, as their brains are still developing.

It is inevitable for teenagers to like sugar, as doctors have medically proven that when sugar is consumed, it produces Dopamine, which is why teenagers enjoy it so much. Despite the fabulous taste and the spontaneous energy it gives teenagers, it is also dangerous to a growing individual's body. One must understand the effects of sugar and how to consume it in moderation to maintain healthy bodies and mental health.

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STIs and The GYT Initiative at Choate

By Sophie Chung '27'

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) represent a pervasive problem among teenagers nowadays. STIs are any bacteria, virus, fungus, or parasite spread through sexual activity. STIs affect people of all ages, yet a great deal of the infections are among sexually active youth. The Get Yourself Tested (GYT) campaign was started in April 2009, STD Awareness month. This campaign aimed to promote HIV and STD testing among sexually active youth. Now that it is April, Choate is prioritizing its students' health by pushing this initiative. Through free testing and strong promotion of sexual health, Choate has been able to create a safe and normalized atmosphere surrounding the topic of STIs.

STIs are infections either bacterial, fungal, parasitic, or viral, spread through any form of sexual contact, including anal, oral and vaginal. While STIs can affect anyone of any age, youth under the age of 25 are most vulnerable to them. A multitude of STIs exist, including Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Herpes, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, Syphilis, Vaginosis, and Hu-

man Papillomavirus Infection (HPV). Gonorrhea and Chlamydia are the most commonly reported STIs amongst teens. Other infections such as Ebola, Mpox, and Zika can also be transmitted sexually. A singular round of antibiotic treatment for STIs is almost always effective in eradicating any bacterial or parasitic infection. However, access to treatment can be difficult for youth. Between 2017 and 2021, according to Beyond ABC, Gonorrhea cases have gone up by 38% and Syphilis cases by 12% in North Texas youth under 18.⁴ Factors fueling this uptick include absence of sexual health education and inadequate access to treatments and condoms.

Choate supports students and prioritizes their sexual health by providing free birth control and condoms to their students. Students are also given proper sexual health education through wellness classes and club or group meetings that address this topic. One group, The Peer Educators Team, wanted to bring a national initiative to Choate. This initiative is called the Get Yourself Tested (GYT)

initiative, aimed towards sexually active youth.³ This initiative's goal was to motivate youth to get tested or treated for STIs because a large percentage of STI cases occur in sexually active teens. Simeon Levesque, a 6th former, said of the GYT initiative, "We understand that students are an under-tested population and are attempting to lift any negative connotations of STIs." He went on to express that the Peer Educators team wanted to bring "its own mini-version of this initiative at the health center." The GYT initiative destigmatizes the topic of STIs at Choate. Finally, Simeon stated, "I think it was a super positive program here, and I hope we can make it a yearly occurrence." Leah McConnell, another 6th former, highlighted how one can get tested at Choate during a free block: "It is very accessible. All you have to do is go to the health center and ask a nurse for an STI test." She went on to note, "They ship your results out, email them to you, and give you the appropriate treatment if necessary." This makes testing for STIs at Choate easier than ever.

With the work of the Peer Educators team and the push of the GYT initiative at Choate, testing and treatment is easier than ever. STIs are prevalent in sexually active youth, so it is important that Choate focuses on students' sexual health as much as possible.

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Graphic by Sarina Fernandez-Grinshpun '25

Bronze or Burn: The Ins and Outs of Tanning in 2024

By Maya Salisbury '26

Tanning has been increasingly associated with beauty, especially with an influx of social media. However, alongside its aesthetic appeal, tanning carries significant health risks due to exposure to harmful radiation. As the understanding of the repercussions of various available tanning methods increases, it is increasingly important to weigh the risks and rewards of these methods. Some of these methods include sun exposure, tanning beds, self-tanning drops, and spray tans, all of which have their own pros and cons.

Tanning Beds use UV radiation, similar to the sun, to tan the skin. However, the UV radiation people are subjected to in a tanning bed has a significantly higher concentration than an individual could experience through natural sunlight. UnityPoint Health shares in an article that “Tanning beds emit roughly 12 times more UVA light than natural sunlight.”² In fact, visiting a tanning bed just once can increase the chances of one getting skin cancer by around 60%. It is also important to keep in mind these UV rays penetrate deeper and deeper into the skin each

time, exacerbating its already dangerous frequency and posing a heightened danger to nerves and blood vessels.

While self-tanning lotions and drops may seem like the lesser of evils, they are not without cons. Many tanning products contain parabens and irritating fragrances. The use of self-tanning products can lead to rashes and interfere with Vitamin D production. Additionally, reliance on self-tanners may create a false sense of security, increasing the likelihood of sunburn when exposed to natural sunlight.³

Another option for those who want to get that glow without the harmful UV rays is spray tans. This form of self-tanning uses aerosol spray with DHA as the active ingredient, which causes the amino acids in the skin to react and darken. DHA, otherwise known as Dihydroxyacetone, darkens the skin through the so-called “Maillard reaction”, a reaction that occurs between DHA and amino acid species found in the skin, stated by Zoe Draelos M.D.¹

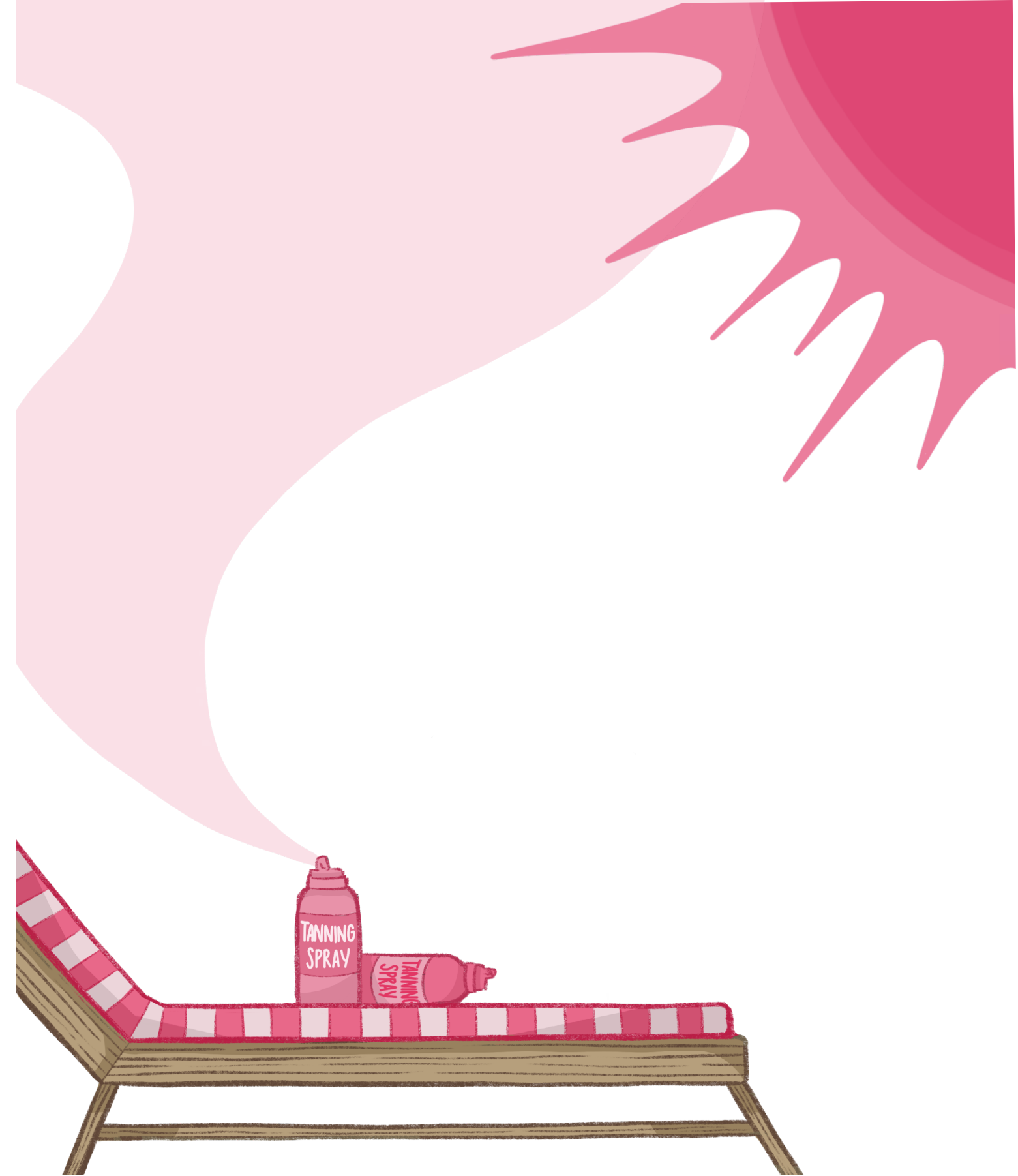
Whilst this has many pros, such as avoiding the harmful sun damage and the streaks

that tanning drops or lotions can create, DermNet states that “inhaling DHA can trigger pulmonary inflammation.”² Along with that, DHA can trigger rosacea and dermatitis.

Natural sunlight comes with a significant amount of UV radiation. For those seeking a sun-kissed complexion, responsible sun exposure remains the safest approach when balanced with protective measures. This means utilizing ample sunscreen and “avoiding exposure from the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.”¹ as stated by UnityPoint Health.

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Graphic by Leah Han '27

Eat Your Veggies!

By Ava Hult-Falk '27

Did you know teenagers our age should be eating 2.5 - 4 cups of vegetables daily? At Choate Rosemary Hall, the dining experience for students can be very hit or miss, specifically when it comes to produce. Many students express dissatisfaction with the quality of fruits and vegetables served, citing issues of mold, defects, or clear age. With a student body of 1000, and at least 500 more faculty, Choate's dining hall staff faces a significant challenge of preparing fresh and appealing meals.

Mr. Paul Kikosicki, SAGE's general manager at Choate, explained the produce selection process: "We use a produce distributor from Hartford called Sardilli. We receive everything in bulk and the cooks sort through the produce according to the menu." Sardilli Produce started in 1955 as a local fruit stand and expanded to a mass production co-operation by 1975. It is fully HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) certified, indicating that it has received validation from an independent third party to

resell produce.¹ HACCP is the most widely recognized certification of food safety internationally. That said, even if food is technically safe to eat, Choate students will not overlook obvious flaws or quality issues.

Students frequently comment on the appearance of the vegetables in the salad bar. Lola '25 remarks, "The produce in the salad bar is quite atrocious, and often is moldy." Moldy or limp vegetables are a significant deterrent for Choate students wanting to include produce within their daily diets. Some days, the salad bar is near perfect, with a robust assortment of ripened fruits and vegetables pulling students in as they pass by. But other days, mold and mildew cast a shadow over the bar, forcing students to keep their distance. This inconsistency makes the produce selection unreliable and throws a wrench in students' plans to maintain a healthy diet.

On the other hand, Main Ingredient and Freestyle's pre-cooked vegetable options are universally liked. Students seem drawn to these options

due to their "taste and convenience" (Valentina '26). If a student is struggling to meet their dietary needs within the produce capacity, they should opt for precooked vegetables as a reliable alternative. Even though our situation is not ideal, it remains crucial to get an adequate amount of fruits and vegetables throughout the day. The USA Department of Agriculture states: "Vegetables provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body, such as vitamins A and C, folate, and potassium."² These minerals are essential to living a long, healthy life, so Choate students should strive to include produce at every meal. Hopefully, when the new dining hall is finished, focus can be shifted from making the current constraining environment functional to improving the quality of Choate's produce!

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Beyond Fear: Embracing AI as a Transformative Partner in Modern Healthcare

By Nana Winston '27

The fear often associated with artificial intelligence (AI) is that it might replace humans in an attempt to "take over the world." This distrust in AI spans into modern healthcare; for instance, a Pew Research study demonstrated that six in ten Americans would be uncomfortable with a provider relying on AI for their healthcare.¹ Regardless of suspicions and anxieties, American Medical Association (AMA) President Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH articulated that, "AI is going to change everything in medicine... I know that AI is not going to replace doctors—but doctors who use AI will replace those who don't."² With AI's rapid improvements and ubiquitous nature, the question at hand isn't how we can inhibit the advancement of AI in medical fields, but how healthcare providers can use this tool to augment the experience of modern medicine.

As per its rapid development, it's inevitable that AI will transform modern healthcare, whether by automating monotonous administrative tasks or by enabling healthcare providers to focus on the human aspects of healthcare (such as empathy, compassion, and complex decision-making). Although AI is not able to mimic human emotion, scientists predict that in the near future, AI's strength in interpret-

ing vast pieces of information will make it an asset in diagnostics and the analysis of medical images.

As of now, ChatGPT successfully passed the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) and can solve internal medicine case files, indicating its potential to be a part of future clinical applications.³ In a study published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research, AI proved itself its diagnostic skills even in its early stages. Researchers fed 36 different clinical scenarios into ChatGPT and found the AI program was 77% accurate when making final diagnoses.⁴ To increase accuracy and professionalism in healthcare, human experts can utilize AI and make the most of the tools it brings.

Just as AI has the power to transform healthcare for the better, with inappropriate applications and inadequate supervision, it has the potential to disrupt the field of medicine. Patients worry the personal touch of their healthcare providers will be lost to the mechanical, repetitive, and monotonous nature of AI. A Pew Research Poll found that 57% of patients worried that AI will erode the connection they have with their healthcare provider.⁵ Though this study suggests a negative impact of AI on physician-to-patient interactions, scientists and tech developers alike

agree that for it to be as fruitful as possible, AI won't be working in healthcare alone; instead, it needs human surveillance and collaboration. Rob Versaw, MBA, vice president of innovation & growth at Envista Holdings, says, "AI offers great potential, [but] integrating it into medical workflow software requires caution. While potentially impeding progress, government regulations play a crucial role in protecting patients and society."⁶ With AI reshaping and revolutionizing the complicated field of medicine, working alongside it can be a step toward enhancing the practice of healthcare.

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Sleep Lows and Sugar Highs

By KanKan Adekoya '27

“Diabetes” is a word that is often thrown around loosely. While parents leisurely warn against overindulging in foods high in sodium, and friends joke about getting diabetes when eating a sugary snack, the stigma surrounding the disease can blind us from understanding just how much our daily habits impact its development. In many cases, it is our unsuspecting habits that lead to the demise of our health.

Diabetes is a condition in which a person’s blood sugar, or glucose, exceeds what the body can handle. With diabetes, the pancreas cannot regulate how much insulin—a hormone that manages blood sugar levels—it produces.² There are various types of diabetes, but Type I and Type II are the most common. Type I diabetes is an autoimmune condition caused by genetics, and there is no way to prevent it from developing. With this disease, the pancreas cannot make enough insulin, which results in low amounts of sugar in the cells and heightened levels in the bloodstream.³

In Type II diabetes, cells do not respond to insulin as they should. This phenomenon, known as insulin resistance, is caused by free fatty acids that in-

hibit insulin-stimulated glucose uptake and glycogen synthesis.⁴ In this case, insulin cannot unlock the cells to let sugar in because the locks, or insulin receptors, are missing or not working. As a result, sugar is locked out of the cells. When sugar cannot enter the cells, it builds up in the bloodstream.⁵

While the general population associates Type II diabetes with obesity and unhealthy eating habits, a study conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago proved a surprising correlation between sleep deprivation and the development of Type II diabetes. In this study, researchers monitored 19 healthy male subjects through two scenarios—in one, they got a full night’s rest—8.5 hours in bed (averaging 7.8 hours asleep) during four consecutive nights. In the other, they spent only 4.5 hours in bed (averaging 4.3 hours asleep) for four consecutive nights. The difference in the amount of fatty acids, glucose, and insulin in their bloodstreams was measured, and the results were noteworthy. The subjects’ fatty acid levels surged from 15 to 30 percent between late night and early morning, and the amount of insulin available to regulate blood glucose levels

decreased by approximately 23 percent.⁶ In a similar study, it was found that despite healthy eating habits, adults with three to five hours of sleep were still at a higher risk of developing Type II diabetes.⁷

Another unexpected culprit can also impact our health: caffeine. In people who already have Type II diabetes, caffeine may lower insulin sensitivity, resulting in high blood sugar levels. Beyond that, caffeine and other “energy” related supplements only exacerbate the effects of chronic sleep deprivation. Even though these substances can provide a temporary boost in alertness, excessive caffeine intake, especially close to bedtime, often disrupts our natural sleep patterns. This not only slows our cognitive function but also increases fatty acids while decreasing insulin.⁸

Adequate levels of sleep and regulated caffeine will not only reduce the chance of developing Type two diabetes, but it will reduce the chances of developing other conditions as well. Using the knowledge we hold as teenagers and bettering our lifestyle choices will improve the quality of our health now and in the future. It may be easier not to worry about decisions now, but if you make the right ones, your future self will thank you.

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Graphic by Leah Han '27

Ultra-Processed Foods and Energy Drinks: A Recipe for Health Risks

By Wayne Wang '26

Adults in the United States get 57% of their calories from ultra-processed foods (UPFs), while children consume 67% of their calories from UPFs. UPFs—such as instant ramen, sodas, and breakfast cereals—are composed mostly of artificial ingredients with minimal raw, natural components. But why are these foods so detrimental to health and why should you reconsider your choices the next time you visit the grocery store?

UPFs are strongly linked to obesity due to their high calorie density and low satiety, often resulting from their fiber. Regular UPF consumption can lead to an excessive daily caloric intake without feeling full. As of 2018, 71% of Americans are overweight or obese.² This condition increases the risk of cardiovascular disease (most commonly heart disease and stroke), type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders such as osteoporosis and arthritis, and some cancers.³ Additionally, because of their

“empty calories” nature (low protein and micronutrients, high in sugar and fat), ultra-processed foods pose a risk of malnutrition.

Another consideration is UPFs’ impact on mental health. A Harvard study conducted between 2003 and 2017 found that participants who were in the top fifth of consumers of UPFs (eating nine to ten servings a day) had a 50% greater risk of developing depression than those in the bottom fifth (eating under four servings a day). These high consumers were also significantly more prone to smoking and less likely to exercise regularly.⁴ Artificial sweeteners, such as acesulfame potassium and stevia extracts, were also associated with depression. Many people report substantial improvements in mental clarity, reduced anxiety, better focus, and sleep once they adopt a predominantly unprocessed diet.

Among all UPFs, energy drinks are some of the most unhealthy. One 16-ounce can of Monster

Energy contains 230 calories, 54 grams of added sugar, 160 milligrams of caffeine, and a myriad of artificial sweeteners, colors, and preservatives. Some lower-calorie options like Prime Energy contain less sugar but even more artificial sweeteners and stimulants. One 12-ounce can of Prime Energy contains 200 milligrams of caffeine – equivalent to two Redbulls or two and a half cups of coffee.⁵ While there is evidence that caffeine and sugar consumption could potentially enhance athletic performance and cognitive function,⁶ very few professional athletes or health-conscious individuals consume energy drinks. Instead, they resort to healthier and more natural sources (such as black coffee and honey), whereas many students and people performing a general exercise regimen consume energy drinks frequently.

Energy drinks are popular among Choate students, and the Choate Store has a selection of energy drinks easily accessible to anyone

on campus. Many students rely on these drinks to boost athletic performance or to stay awake during the day. While energy drinks could improve your athletic performance and make you feel sharper and more alert, there are healthier alternatives that do not contain as much caffeine, added sugars, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives. For example, black coffee gives you a natural source of caffeine while containing zero calories, and if its taste is difficult to handle, adding some milk and cane sugar will not make it unhealthy. Tea is another excellent option, offering caffeine with zero calories and the additional benefits of l-theanine – an amino acid naturally occurring in tea that could ease anxiety and insomnia.

It is difficult to follow a diet consisting of primarily unprocessed or minimally processed foods like steak and oatmeal because it could be expensive and inaccessible for many and is not as stimulating to the taste buds as UPFs.

However, it is crucial to understand the health consequences of daily food and drink choices and make efforts to reduce reliance on UPFs as much as possible.

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Behind the Scenes: How Athletic Trainers Protect Athletes from Injuries

By Sabrina Liu '28

In the world of sports, where competition and hard work are celebrated, the safety and well-being of athletes are just as crucial as their performance. Behind the scenes, athletic trainers play a key role in ensuring that athletes recover from injuries, stay healthy, and prevent future setbacks. Their expertise is indispensable for athletes at all levels.

There is a multidisciplinary team of four athletic trainers here at Choate Rosemary Hall. The head athletic trainer, Mr. Holloway, explained that the trainers are “responsible for the prevention, the recognition, the evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports-related injuries.” They cover everything from pre-season preparation to practices to game days.

When it comes to common injuries, Mr. Holloway highlighted concussions and musculoskeletal injuries, such as sprains, strains, and fractures, as

the most frequent issues. However, Mr. Holloway also touched on an essential point: athletes' responsibility for their own health. “I always say they need to focus on what I call the other 22 hours—those hours away from practice.” Sleep is particularly crucial. Mr. Holloway claimed research shows that athletes who sleep fewer than seven hours are significantly more likely to sustain an injury. By focusing on rest and recovery, athletes can reduce the likelihood of injury and improve overall performance.

When injuries do occur, athletic trainers are often the first responders. Their ability to quickly assess the situation and provide immediate care can have a profound impact on an athlete's recovery. The trainers “try to take a holistic approach by being person-first, player-second”, according to Mr. Holloway. This means that beyond the physical

injury, trainers consider the athlete's emotional and psychological state, as both factors can influence recovery. For example, when an athlete suffers a long-term injury like a ligament tear or a stress fracture, trainers not only create physical rehabilitation plans but also monitor the athlete's mental well-being. There are “questionnaires and one-on-one check-ins to make sure athletes are emotionally ready to return to play,” Mr. Holloway mentioned. This holistic approach ensures that athletes are not only physically capable of competing but also mentally prepared to handle the pressures of returning to the sport.

Athletic trainers at Choate Rosemary Hall are essential in maintaining the well-being of athletes, ensuring they are not only physically fit but also mentally prepared to perform at their best. By focusing on injury prevention, immediate care, and long-

term recovery, they provide holistic support that goes beyond addressing just the physical injury. With a multidisciplinary approach, these trainers

emphasize the importance of self-care, rest, and mental health, helping athletes return to the field stronger and more resilient. Their role is critical in fostering

a safe and supportive environment for athletes to thrive in both competition and recovery.



Graphic by Leah Han '27

THANKS

4

READING

