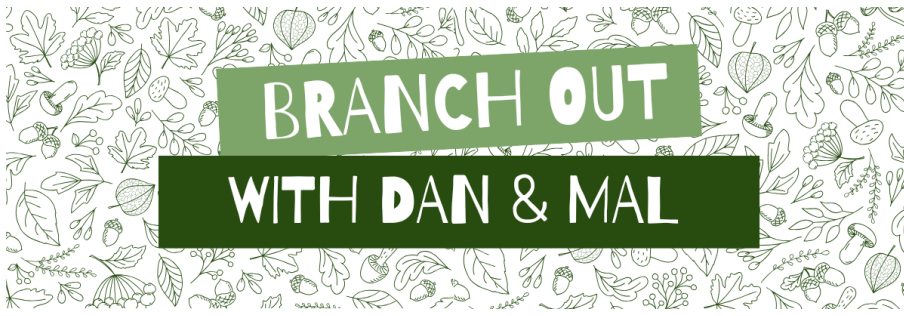




Welcome to Branch Out with Dan & Mal, a weekly newsletter on all things health, wellbeing, and wellness at Midland!

OAKay, Let's Talk...

Mallory's Report:

If you take one thing from my report today, let it be this: **don't ignore your body's signals**. This week, I've seen many students with preventable issues—low back pain, muscle soreness, joint discomfort. These are signs your body needs attention. Are you resting enough? Sitting too long? Overdoing it physically? What's your posture like, especially during long hours on a Chromebook or in a classroom? How we sit, stand, and move matters; it can prevent injury and make daily life easier. If you're feeling pain or discomfort, let's talk before it gets worse. Together, we can find the root cause and address it.

Dan's Report:

As we quickly approach the first vacation of the school year at the end of next week I continue to marvel at the unique tenacity and resilience of Midland students. Day after day you all show up and take on your responsibilities while also helping one another along the way. That is what living life is about: how we respond every day. As I mentioned to a student the other day, let's make one of our goals in life to become "masters of response."

As we all know, life keeps moving forward every single day whether we like it or not and we all have our limits. So it is important to establish what I think of as a "**personal life system**" - a "way" of doing things that best fits our particular uniqueness as a multidimensional human being. All of us are figuring out how we can be productive and effective, and then we're tweaking that system as certain areas may reveal themselves to be less effective. Consider your life system and if there is anything needing adjustment, then act on the steps needed to ignite positive change. And as always, stop by the Health Center if you ever want to brainstorm this process together!

In a Nutshell -- Deep Dive of the Week

Monster. Red Bull. Celsius. We know them—and maybe even love them. They can give us a quick energy boost, but what's really going on behind the label?

First, a quick clarification:

Energy drinks (like Red Bull or Celsius) are not the same as sports drinks (like Gatorade). Sports drinks replace electrolytes; energy drinks rely on caffeine, sugar, and other stimulants to give you a jolt of energy.

Possible Benefits:

Some studies show energy drinks may improve endurance, muscle strength, memory, and reaction time.

But here's the downside:

- They're dehydrating - not hydrating - due to the caffeine content
- They can raise your heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormones
- Over time, they may affect liver and kidney function, increase anxiety, and cause sleep problems

Bottom line:

Ask yourself why you're reaching for an energy drink. Is it because you're tired and need rest? Is it stress or performance pressure? There's a time and place for energy drinks—but let's practice being informed, critical consumers.

For more information on energy drinks and their impacts, read this awesome, thorough article by a cardiologist and registered dietician on the latest energy drink research.

P.S. If you want a hot take on Celsius, check out this article!

Acorny Ending

Taking care of yourself isn't always easy, especially with a packed schedule, social pressures, and academic stress. We can't take your Spanish test for you, but we're here to debrief it afterward. We can't make your roommate clean their side of the room, but we can help you practice having the conversation.

We're on your team—and we're rooting for you.

Mal & Dan