

# Pharmacists issue advice to students on managing stress during exam season



Ahead of the commencement of the Leaving Cert and Junior Cert exams next week, pharmacists are today offering advice on how to manage stress to prevent it from negatively impacting the health and performance of exam students. Pharmacists advise that students take proactive steps to ensure that exam stress does not impact their health.

According to pharmacist and Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) Vice President, Ann Marie Horan, “After two years during which their education was significantly affected, many students may be feeling stressed and anxious about sitting the Junior or Leaving Certificate this year. It is completely normal to feel worried around this time but for some people their exams can seem overwhelming and can lead to unhealthy levels of stress or anxiety. This can negatively impact people’s health and exam performance and can lead to difficulty sleeping, stomach upsets, diarrhoea, cold sores and tension headaches. Furthermore, students with conditions such as asthma, sinusitis or allergic reactions can experience an aggravation of these conditions around exam time.

“Students have worked really hard to get to this point and have put a lot of effort into their studies. It’s important that they can get a clear run at their exams without having to deal with health issues. Every year, pharmacists are visited by students or their parents looking for advice on how to minimise stress and keep healthy for the coming weeks.”

## **Tips from Pharmacists to prevent Exam Stress:**

- **Promote good health:** Eat regular, well-balanced, healthy meals, schedule study breaks, take exercise and make sure to get sufficient sleep. Consider taking multivitamins if your diet is not ideal.
- **Headaches:** Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. Study in a well-ventilated room and take regular breaks.
- **Stomach upsets:** Try to eat well. Consume small amounts regularly and avoid junk and spicy foods.
- **Eczema:** Keep the skin well moisturised with ointments and lotions. Avoid products with a high alcohol content as these can irritate sensitive skin.
- **Asthma:** Use inhalers as advised by your pharmacist. Preventative inhalers should be used regularly. Carry an inhaler with you at all times so that it can be used during an exam, if required.
- **Hay Fever:** If you suffer with hay fever, keep doors and windows closed when studying, and avoid going outdoors when the pollen count is at its highest. Students who need to take antihistamines should make sure to take tablets that don't cause drowsiness.
- **Insomnia:** Avoid products containing caffeine. Take some light exercise or a bath or shower in order to relax before bedtime. Don't study in bed as the brain will become over-stimulated.