



AVOIDING SENIORITIS

The symptoms show up every year. High school seniors try to balance extracurricular activities, a social life, college admission, and perhaps a part-time job. Somewhere along the way, homework begins to seem less important and spending time with friends becomes the top priority. Once college acceptance letters arrive, high school seems even less important and grades begin to slide.

Senioritis is easy to catch and hard to get rid of. It can also put your future plans at risk.

Every year, poor academic performance causes colleges to take back their offers of admission, put students on academic probation, or change financial aid packages.

Follow these tips to stay on track:

Plan ahead. You probably already know what activities you'll be involved in during your senior year. And you know that college application deadlines are coming up fast.

A calendar or planner can help keep track of all your obligations, while still leaving time for fun with friends and family. Write down all of your deadlines, for applications, papers, tests, and so on. Then make note of other activities, such as your sports schedule, drama or band rehearsals, SAT or ACT test days, or college visits.

Map out what you have to do. To complete that English paper, when should you begin working on it? If the big game is the night before the due date, plan to finish the paper a few days ahead of time.

Don't obsess. It's easy to get caught up in the college admission process and forget about the here and now.

Don't overload your schedule with extracurricular activities just to

impress colleges. You don't have time for that. Do the things you love, and drop activities that you're just not that committed to.

Talk about it. Senior year can be exhilarating and bittersweet—all at the same time. You and your friends catalog all the "lasts"—the last first day of school, the last football game, the last prom. But you're also looking forward to graduating and starting college.

Share your feelings. Are you scared about leaving high school? Stressed about the admission process? Excited for the new experiences college will bring? Useful people to talk to are your friends (who are going through the same things you are), your parents, your guidance counselor, and other adults whom you respect.

Finding a healthy outlet for stress and anxiety will help you finish your senior year strong.