

The Freshman 15

- *What is the "Freshman 15"?*
 - The Freshman 15 refers to the weight that college student's gain in their first year of attendance; it can occur later in their college career as well. There is some debate currently as to how much weight students are putting on with estimates as high as 20-25 pounds and as low as 5-10 pounds.
- *Causes of the "Freshman 15"*
 - Changes in Schedule
 - Too Many Things Choices
 - Lack of Control; Too many things prepared and in front of you! Hard to resist!
 - Emotional Eating or Eating When Not Hungry
 - Snacking (Recreational Eating)
 - Drink Choices
 - Lack of Exercise
 - Lack of Sleep
- *Ways to Avoid the "Freshman 15"*
 - Keep to a Schedule:
 - A good thing to do is to plan your meals in advance so you are not getting too hungry and over-eating. The ideal time between meals is 3-4 hours, this is made up of small meals and snacks that will help avoid over-eating as well. Finally you should eat breakfast each day because it stimulates your metabolism.
 - Make Smart Choices:
 - It is good to look at the dining hall menus and plan out a balanced meal in advance. If you need some help planning these meals you can go to mypyramid.gov. In the case that your meals are not planned out, walk through the dining hall and see all the options available before choosing your food. It is always a great idea to start off with the salad bar.
 - Control Yourself:
 - It is important to pay attention to the amount of food that you are consuming in a day, which means don't multitask when eating. Pay attention to when your body is telling you that you are full, which means stop eating. Another key is to watch your portion sizes. You can find the daily recommended servings for each day on the website listed above. When eating in the dining halls, try getting a little on your plate at a time and then go back up for more if you're still hungry. This will help with portion control and avoid wasting food.
 - Smart Snacking:
 - Become aware of cues that may encourage you to eat when you're not really hungry. When getting one of these cues, wait five minutes to make sure you're really hungry before eating. If you are hungry then have something to eat and focus on what you're eating. A good idea is to always have low calorie snacks (e.g. fruits, vegetables, low fat dips) accessible to you. Remember that fat-free snacks do not mean calorie-free. Another good thing to have is a list of activities to do when an urge hits you instead of eating.
 - Be Mindful of What You Drink:
 - One reason that college students may gain weight is that they begin drinking alcohol, which contains calories! The best drink choice is water, which adults need plenty of each day to stay healthy. Other good choices like 100% fruit juices and skim or low-fat milk products, all of which are available in each of the dining halls. The things that you want to limit are soda and coffee because they contain calories, sugar and caffeine which can also cause weight gain.

- Get Active:
 - A key to avoiding weight gain is to stay active. Ideally, you should exercise for at least 20 minutes three to four times per week. There are plenty of things at the Student Recreation Center that can help you achieve this goal. Other things you can take advantage of on campus are walking to classes and intramural sports teams. By being active on a daily basis, you are burning calories and also building muscles which help to burn even more calories.
- Get Some Sleep:
 - Getting at least seven to eight hours of sleep each night is important for both your academics and avoiding weight gain, because when you don't get enough sleep your body produces hormones that encourage weight gain. Here are some tips to follow:
 - Wake up around the same time every day, even on weekends
 - Open the curtains in your room during the day to let sun shine in
 - Only lay down in bed when you are actually going to fall asleep
 - Watch the amount of napping you do during the day
 - Close your curtains at night to make the room as dark as possible for sleeping
 - Cut down on things that may keep you awake at night such as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol
 - Stick to a regular exercise plan, but don't exercise too close to bedtime.
 - Make time to relax each night with things like a warm shower, journaling, or listening to music (don't watch television it stimulates you)

References:

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