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## **1** The Freshman 15 is inevitable

**false.** The Freshman 15 is a fictitious term. There are studies to support and dispute the Freshman 15. The reality is, off to college means being faced with many changes. Weight gain can occur due to the changes in lifestyle. But...it's not inevitable. To be prepared, check in to [www.collegeeatingguide.com](http://www.collegeeatingguide.com) to read the Monthly Food Bites column or pick up a copy of *The College Student's Guide to Eating Well on Campus*, by Ann Selkowitz Litt. (Tulip Hill Press, 2000)

Eating food on the campus meal plan is the fastest way to pack on pounds  
**false.** Campus meal plans offer a variety of food. It is up to you to make sound food choices from what is offered. Check out the October Food Bites column for more information on this.

Late night snacking is the reason why most kids gain weight in college  
**true and false.** Your schedule changes...if you are going to be up late at night be sure to plan to eat a good snack even if it is after some "magic" hour. If you don't plan ahead, you will be more likely to make poor food choices. It's never when you eat that causes weight gain, it's how much you eat.

## Skipping breakfast can help you to lose weight

**false.** Many people believe that skipping breakfast saves calories. Research has shown quite the opposite to be true. Eating a good breakfast gets your body going early and cuts down on the nighttime munchies.

If you are overweight, it's best to get the weight off quickly by dieting  
**false.** Dieting, or restrictive eating, will never result in permanent weight loss. If you need to lose weight, you will need to eat less and exercise more. But eating less does not mean eating as little as possible to achieve a quick result. Learn more about healthy weight loss in subsequent columns.

It's inevitable right? As far as you've been told, everyone gains "the freshman 15," those notorious extra pounds that show up just in time for your first trip home after a few months of college eating. There have been studies confirming that college students do gain weight and studies to refute the weight gain. Studies are irrelevant, though, if you happen to be the one whose pants seem to shrink after a few months at school.

While the pressures of a new place, new friends, and new demands make healthy eating the last thing you want to think about, there are simple and quick ways to keep from gaining any excess weight in college. This is the time to begin developing a healthy attitude and awareness towards food so that eating remains an enjoyable experience, not one that confuses and stresses you even more than college life!

### ***The best defense to the Freshman 15 is to know the food obstacles you might face.***

- Whacked out schedules: Sleeping until 11 one day, 2 the next wreaks havoc on meal planning. Think about imposing a schedule to stay on track.
- Lack of structured activities: Remember high school lacrosse practice? Gone! Whether you decide to play an intramural sport, roller blade around campus or take a yoga class, be sure to plan activities in your day.
- Too much drinking...and munching: It's not just the calories you drink...and that appears to be many, it's the poor food choices you make when you drink.
- Late night eating is a reality...and not entirely bad. Although you might have heard that eating "after seven" makes it easier to gain weight, you're not living a 9-to-5 lifestyle. Your eating needs to be adjusted to your college schedule. If you eat dinner at six and stay up until 2 A.M...it's a good idea to plan an evening snack.
- Using food to help you cope: College life is a roller coaster of emotions-especially if this is your first experience away from home. Food can serve as a great distracter, comfort or social crutch. Using food to cope, celebrate, relax, or procrastinate are all examples of non-hunger eating...the situations where we eat when we probably aren't hungry. All of us occasionally eat when we're not hungry, but it is useful to learn to identify and manage non-hunger eating.
- Finally...some college students lose weight when they leave home. If you are having trouble eating, be sure to consult with a professional on campus.

To learn more about Eating Well on Campus, check out... [www.collegeeatingguide.com](http://www.collegeeatingguide.com)

## ○ Respect the importance of mealtimes by putting yourself on an eating schedule

You may never have a 9-5 day for your college experience, but your body will do better if you can impose an eating plan to keep you on track. Try and eat within an hour of waking and then refuel every three to four hours. This way, you won't feel out of control hunger and you may even be able to fill up on great food at meal times rather than snacking throughout the day.

## ○ Give up grazing

Munching on "handfuls" of crackers, cereal, pretzels, almonds...add calories quickly. Instead of grazing through the day and night, eat nourishing meals and snacks. You will eat in a more satisfying way and have an easier time managing your intake. (See chart following.)

## ○ Plan ahead to include a decent late night snack

If you are staying up until the wee hours of the morning you are going to feel hungry. Instead of being at the mercy of 24 hours takeout or vending machines, stock your mini fridge with decent snacks such as yogurt, fruit, or hard cooked eggs and keep instant cereals and canned soups on hand.

## ○ Plan to move your body each and every day

Do something everyday that is active...walk to class, take a bike ride, sign up for a class. Staying active will help you feel better, motivate you to eat better, provide the opportunity to think better...and even help you to sleep better.

## ○ Don't drink your calories

Large quantities of alcohol equate to large numbers of calories, which often leads to weight gain. It's not only the calories in alcohol and beer. Drinking fancy coffee drinks, smoothies, sodas...even fruit juice can help pack on the pounds. The flip side is...if you need to gain weight, drinking smoothies and fruit juice is something to add to your diet. For more information, see *The College Student's Guide To Eating Well on Campus* for a complete list of the calories in beverages.

## SATISFYING SNACKS TO BEAT GRAZING

Instead of munching on crackers, chips, dry cereal out of the box or even a handful of mixed nuts, a much more satisfying snack might include:

- Soup
- Yogurt
- Cereal and milk
- Fruit and cottage cheese
- Peanut butter on an English muffin
- Hot cereal