



*Center for
Health & Hygiene
in the Home & Community*

The Center for Health and Hygiene in the Home and Community serves as a national and international resource for information and education, applied research, professional training and conferences. The Center focuses on issues relating to hygiene and infection control in areas such as:

- consumer food safety
- home hygiene
- daycare
- preschool
- homecare
- sports and leisure activity
- travel and hospitality

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Back to School Nutrition
Tips for College Students



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Nutrition Matters when Starting School

Most college students are pressed for time, under a lot of stress, and can find themselves eating on the go.

Sometimes it's difficult to avoid fast food restaurants or skipping meals. It's important, especially with so much to do, to be aware of the proper nutrition your body needs to help you perform at your peak, both in the classroom and in the rest of your daily life.

A healthy diet can help you feel better and cope well with stress, putting you on the right track for a successful semester!

What is Nutrition?

The definition of nutrition literally means "the act or process of nourishing or being nourished". It is the major part of the process in which your body uses what you eat to build muscle, give you energy and keep you focused. The major nutrients are protein, carbohydrates and fat. Each plays an important role in your body and it is important to include them all daily.

*Use our meal and snack planning tips
inside while dining in and around
campus. . .*

Resources

If you'd like to find out more about your daily needs, you can go to the USDA's site at www.mypyramid.gov. There, you can find out what you need to eat every day to maintain your health based on your height, weight and activity level.



Use MyPyramid to:

- Create your individualized diet and physical activity plan
- Track and assess your food intake
- Track and assess your physical activity
- Track your progress
- Learn more about eat food group
- Learn how to plan a daily menu
- Read weekly nutrition tips

Eat a Balanced Diet

Protein

Bodies need protein to build and maintain muscle, bone and skin and for cells to function properly.

Protein is found in meats, fish, eggs, dairy products, nuts, beans and some grains. Proteins from animal sources are called “complete proteins”, meaning that they contain the essential amino acids our bodies cannot make themselves. If you are a vegetarian, it is essential that you combine different plant proteins to get all the amino acids you need.

Carbohydrate

These are one of the main energy sources for your body. After eating carbs, your liver breaks them down into glucose (blood sugar). Your body uses this as energy for your cells, tissues and organs. They are called simple or complex, depending on how fast your body can digest and absorb the sugar.

- Simple carbohydrates are found in fruits, dairy products and table sugar.
- Complex carbohydrates are found in whole grain breads and cereals, legumes and starches.

Fat

Dietary fat is needed for the absorption of vitamins and is important in growth and keeping you healthy. It is needed for cellular function. It gives foods taste and helps you to feel full. There are three main types of fats in the diet.

- Saturated fats come from animal sources and should be eaten sparingly as they are the main dietary cause of high cholesterol.
- Trans-fat is a fat that has been chemically altered to have similar properties to saturated fat. Like saturated fat, it is best to avoid a large amount of it in your diet.



Some local authorities are going so far as to ban the inclusion of trans fats in foods served at local restaurants and take-outs.

- Mono- and polyunsaturated fats come from vegetable sources and are also found in fish, nuts and seeds. They may help to lower your cholesterol levels, but a moderate intake of these healthful types of fat is recommended.

Water

Proper hydration is key to making sure your body is able to process all of the food you are eating in the most efficient way. It is also really important for muscle and brain function. You need 8 eight ounce glasses of fluid per day and more if you exercise regularly. Getting this much fluid is not as difficult as you may think.

- Buy a water bottle and keep it with you when going to and from class.
- Stock up on calorie-free drink packets or caffeine free tea packets; you can even buy them in single servings so you can just pour them into your bottle and go!
- If you decide to choose soda, opt for sugar-free brands.

Make Healthful Choices

In the Dining Hall

Living on campus usually means that the dining hall provides most of your meals. Sometimes choosing good nutrition can be difficult and a little overwhelming when faced with the amount of food and variety in a typical dining hall. Don't worry, it is possible! Keep these strategies in mind when heading in for a meal:

- For breakfast, aim to get a good mix of fat, carbohydrate and protein to get a good start to your day. A combination of all three will keep you fuller longer and give you energy to last until lunch time. Try eggs with wheat toast and fruit or oatmeal with low fat milk or soy milk and nuts.
- Lunch doesn't have to be pizza every day (although it is okay to eat pizza – just not all the time!). Make use of the salad bar or deli

sandwich counter but be sure to use dressings, cheeses and condiments, sparingly. Combine a green salad with chicken from the grill or add extra vegetables from the salad bar on top of your pizza. Small steps like asking for



pretzels instead of chips or fries or choosing a piece of fruit for dessert can make a big impact on your health in the long run.

- Dinner is usually when there are the most options available. Be choosy! You don't have to try a little bit of everything and chances are you will see the item on the menu again.
- Walk around and look at all of the options available that day before deciding on your meal.
- Desserts are always available, but that doesn't mean they have to be eaten nightly. If you must have dessert, choose options like a cookie or a small scoop of ice cream.
- Opt for lean proteins, such as chicken breast, fish or tofu, instead of burgers and chops.
- Keep your plate 50% vegetables, 25% protein and 25% starch (such as pasta, potato, or rice). This way, you know you are working towards getting your daily vegetable needs.
- Check the dining services website for the daily fare. Most services make their weekly menus available online and larger schools have more than one dining hall, sometimes offering different items at each one.

In Your Dorm

Dormitory living can be a challenge when you are making nutritious choices for yourself. With late night study sessions, movies and going out, snacking can be difficult to avoid.. Snacking itself isn't bad, but having healthful snack options on hand can help prevent trips to the vending machines and late night eateries. Here's a list of

some things you can keep in your room to snack on:

- Shelf stable items – Whole grain crackers, trail mix, dried fruit, nuts, rice cakes, cereals, apples, oranges, applesauce or fruit containers, peanut butter, tuna packets
- Microwaveable items – snack-sized popcorn, potatoes, oatmeal packets, soups, reduced sugar hot cocoa, single serving macaroni and cheese, quick cooking rice
- Refrigerator items – dairy milk, soy milk yogurt, string cheese, salsa, hummus, pre-cut carrots and celery, vegetables (such as pre-cut broccoli)



Eating Out

Every now and then you may opt to eat with your friends. Even though making good choices may not be easy all the time, especially at venues such as games, here are a few things to look for when you are out grabbing a bite:

- Choose grilled or roasted meats instead of fried.
- Ask for side substitutions (such as a salad or vegetable instead of fries or even a baked potato)
- Ask for dressings and sauces on the side.
- Don't be afraid to ask how something is cooked! If you are unsure about the menu item, ask the server for clarification.

