Fight the Fifteen…and Win!

Incoming college freshman are often haunted by the rumored “freshman 15”, but did you know the “freshman 15” is, in fact, a myth? Research conducted at Rutgers University found that three-quarters of the students studied gained weight their first year of college, however the average weight gain was seven pounds, not fifteen. This weight gain correlates to eating roughly 100 excess calories per day during your freshman year of college. Weight gain during the first year of college can be attributed to being in a new environment and having more freedom to decide when, what and how much to eat. From endless trips to the dining hall, late night munchies when studying, or the temptation of the grease trucks, one is likely to feel a few extra pounds sneaking on.

Tip the scale in your favor by following these suggestions:

**Mix it up:** Choose a variety of foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins in appropriate amounts to keep you satisfied throughout the day.

**Rise, shine & eat:** Eating a healthy breakfast can provide you with the energy to concentrate and stay focused during morning classes. Studies show that individuals who eat breakfast are less likely to overeat at lunch and can better manage their weight.

**Choose healthy snacks:** Low fat snacks such as popcorn, whole grain pretzels, fruits and veggies are great choices. Just remember, excess calories from all foods can lead to weight gain, regardless of how healthy they are.

**Limit eating while studying:** Try setting aside separate times to eat and study. Mindless munching while you read, write a paper or compute math problems can add up.

**Control portion sizes:** If there are several items in the dining hall that you want to try, keeping the portion sizes small can help prevent you from packing on the pounds. Try sampling multiple food items instead of packing up your plate.

**Don’t forget to exercise:** Get off the bus a stop early, join an intramural sports team or take a walk around campus with a friend. Establishing a regular exercise routine can be a great source of fun and is an important factor in weight maintenance.

Everybody was Kung-Food Fighting

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Questions? Post on our Facebook (RU Healthy Dining Team), Twitter (@RUHDT), Instagram (@RU_HDT) or e-mail us at peggy@rci.rutgers.edu. Our mission is to educate students about nutrition and encourage them to make healthier food and lifestyle choices. For more info, nutrient analysis and past newsletters visit our web page at http://food.rutgers.edu or visit our blog at http://ruhdt.wordpress.com