

FitFacts®

Healthy Eating – MyPlate On Campus

WHILE THE “FRESHMAN 15” IS OFTEN AN EXAGGERATION, THE AVERAGE TEENAGER ENTERS COLLEGE AT A HEALTHIER WEIGHT AND BASELINE HEALTH STATUS THAN WHEN THEY DEPART. WHILE ONE-THIRD OF CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE, TWO-THIRDS OF ADULTS ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE. FOR MANY, IT IS DURING COLLEGE THAT THIS TRANSITION FROM A HEALTHY WEIGHT TO AN UNHEALTHY WEIGHT OCCURS.

Recognizing the challenges of eating healthy on campus, MyPlate (the federal government’s best advice for how to eat healthfully) recently launched “[MyPlate on Campus](#)”. This initiative aims to get college students talking about healthy nutrition and recruit students as “campus ambassadors”. The MyPlate ambassadors help their peers learn how to make the best choices in the dining hall, build healthy meals using all of the food groups, prepare meals with just a microwave and mini-fridge, learn basic cooking skills, and make smart nutrition choices anywhere they eat, including fast-food joints and sporting events. The ambassadors also promote increased physical activity by biking or walking to class, taking study breaks to do quick exercises like push-ups and jumping jacks, joining exercise classes or intramural teams, and being active when spending time with friends.

College students interested in becoming ambassadors should check out MyPlate On Campus for more information. For those that are simply interested in becoming healthier, check out these tips from the MyPlate On Campus Toolkit:

- 1. Head to class prepared.** Pack healthy snacks so you won’t turn to vending machines, which are typically packed with overpriced and heavily processed junk food.
- 2. Eat some foods less often.** College students will always eat pizza and drink beer, but these can be “sometimes” foods eaten in smaller amounts, less frequently. Instead of 4 slices of pizza and 2 beers, consider 2 slices of pizza, a beer, a glass of water and a side salad.



- 3. Drink water.** Water should be your first choice. Sodas, caffeine-loaded energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar and calories – at the very least, consume these in moderation. Get your caffeine fix from plain coffee or unsweetened iced tea.
- 4. Grab a friend and get moving.** College can be a very social experience, so make a friend and do something active together.
- 5. Have fun!** The most effective form of exercise is the one that you will stick with! Make sure to choose activities that you enjoy.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[American Council on Exercise](#)

ACE Workout Library: [Top 10 Tips to Avoid the ‘Freshman 15’](#)

[U.S. News](#)