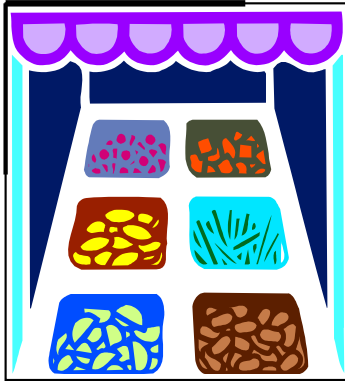




Managing Healthy Eating



For many people, the “all you can eat” experience at every meal encourages unhealthy indulgences. Having a game plan can help.

- ▶ Making it to the dining hall is the first step in healthful eating. There are usually a variety of choices available which are much more difficult to come by if you miss dining hall meals.
- ▶ Try to plan your schedule so that you will have time for meals. It’s difficult to keep your concentration levels up when you have back-to-back classes without time for food. You need the break, both physically and mentally.
- ▶ Many college students wake up just before their first class, and don’t have time for the dining hall breakfast. If this sounds familiar, keep some nutritious food in your room, so that you can eat within an hour or two of waking.
- ▶ Dining halls offer a variety of foods which gives you the opportunity to make balanced selections. Each meal should include:

A fruit and /or a vegetable or two

A good source of protein: dairy foods, meat, fish poultry, eggs, soy foods, legumes or nuts

A starch – whenever possible, try to choose ones containing some fiber such as whole grain breads, cereals, brown rice, baked sweet or white potatoes with the skin. These help to fill you up and provide lots of nutrients.

- ▶ Walk through the serving line to see what is available. This way, you can plan which foods to take, without overloading your tray. Take only the amount you would have eaten if you were at home.
- ▶ Most dining halls run on cycle menus, which means that an item *will* appear again. Don’t feel that you need to sample many foods at one time.
- ▶ If you see nothing appealing in the dining hall, you need not go hungry. Often dining halls make basic items available at all meals, such as peanut butter and jelly or cold cereals. Get to know the dining hall manager and see if this policy exists, or if they provide any other items for special circumstances.

If you wake up late, shift your meals to later in the day. Be prepared for a late night meal, instead of relying on pizza and junk food. Keep some food in your room, if rules permit.

Balanced Meals at the Dining Hall

BREAKFAST

- ▶ Any of the following make a great breakfast:
 - Cold cereal – especially whole grain varieties with skim milk
 - Hot cereal, such as oatmeal, topped with raisins or bananas
 - Waffles with fruit, a glass of skim milk
 - Whole grain toast with peanut butter and juice
 - Eggs (not more than a few times a week), whole grain toast and juice
 - Low or non-fat yogurt with fresh fruit and/or cold cereal

LUNCH

- ▶ **Sandwiches** – choose lean meats (turkey, roast beef, grilled chicken or ham), grilled or fresh vegetables and low fat cheese if available; opt for whole grain bread or rolls; spread with mustard or low fat mayonnaise or other dressing.
- ▶ **At the salad bar:** start with dark green lettuce; pile on plain fresh vegetables, such as carrots, peppers, mushrooms, tomatoes – anything you like. Limit items made with mayonnaise or other dressings. To make your salad into a meal, add plain proteins, such as beans, tuna, cottage cheese, chicken strips, eggs, grated cheese. Stay away from high fat toppers such as bacon bits, croutons and Chinese noodles. Choose low fat dressings or liberally sprinkle with vinegar first, then oil. Be aware that ladles of full fat salad dressings can add hundreds of extra calories!
- ▶ **Soups** – are a great way to get an extra serving of vegetables. Choose broth or tomato based rather than cream based varieties.
- ▶ **Pasta** – stick with marinara rather than cream sauces. Garlic and oil pasta dishes are healthy, but higher in calories than those with marinara sauces.

DINNER

- ▶ **Vary your entrée selections** – choose meat once a week, fish twice a week, poultry twice a week, and a vegetarian meal twice a week, for example.
- ▶ **Vegetables-** if they are laden with butter, ask if plain steamed are available, and add a small amount of butter yourself. If a microwave oven is provided on the dining hall floor, take fresh veggies from the salad bar, and steam them yourself.
- ▶ **Soup & Salad** -see the suggestions at lunchtime, above.
- ▶ **Baked potatoes** – white or sweet, eat the skin. Some dining halls have baked potato bars. Here you can pile on vegetables, but be frugal with cheese sauces or sour cream. Instead, go for cottage cheese, tofu, yogurt, vegetarian chili or marinara sauce.

DESSERT

- ▶ You may not be used to all the choices available. Even healthful sounding selections, like low fat frozen yogurt and fruit cobblers can be packed with sugar and calories. The best idea is to have dessert only a few times a week, not at every meal!
- ▶ Remember - a piece of fruit or a cup of herbal tea can be a nice way to end a meal!

References:

- 1) Selkowitz Litt A. The College Student's Guide to Eating Well On Campus. Bethesda: Tulip Hill Press. 2000.
- 2) Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York. The "Go Ask" Alice Book of Answers, A Guide to Good Physical, Sexual and Emotional Health. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998.