

Freshman 15

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Each year about this time people begin debating the phenomena of the “Freshman 15”. It seems to be a part of college folklore—that infamous 15 pounds many freshmen can expect to gain by the end of their first year. But is this reality or is it myth? Until recently no scientific studies have examined this question. Now, ongoing research at Cornell’s Division of Nutritional Sciences has discovered that Cornell students tend to gain an average of four pounds during their first semester. Other studies have indicated that the number is closer to 7 or 8 pounds. Don’t be surprised—freshman weight gain is not a myth, but it doesn’t have to be your reality! Weight gain may be triggered by:

Changes In Eating Habits

Unlimited access to a variety of foods (many that are high in calories and fat) and midnight munchies can send calorie intake to new heights.

Changes In Activity

High school athletes are now less active, but still eating enough to fuel a cross-country runner.

Stress

Overeating as a response to the stresses of campus life!

Tips To Help You Prevent The Freshman 15

#1 Eat Healthy Not Hearty—Learn what you need for a balanced meal. Eat more fruits, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains and fewer burgers, fried foods and rich desserts. If you approach the Commons with an “all you can eat” attitude, the calories will add up quickly.

#2 Be Portion Size Savvy—Any food can fit into a plan for healthy eating if you eat in moderation.

#3 Think Before You Drink—Water works best in meeting your body’s fluid needs and it’s calorie-free unlike most other beverages. Alcoholic beverages contain hidden calories that tend to be stored as body fat.

#4 Check Your Weight Regularly—There is a scale in the office of the University Dietitian that you are welcome to use.

#5 Get Moving—“De”stress while burning calories—rollerblade, bike, visit the gym or walk the campus. Everyone needs at least 30 minutes of exercise each day.

Note to all smug sophomores out there—researchers say that the infamous “Freshman 15” is often followed by the “Sophomore 2 or 3”!