

College Eating 101

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Eating healthfully at college may seem intimidating, but it doesn't have to be difficult. Most dining halls at college provide plenty of nutritious options and campuses usually offer a lot of fitness options.

Answers to Common Dining Hall Dilemmas

What if I can't find any food I like?

Be creative. If you don't like the hot food offered, try to combine foods from different areas of the dining hall. For example, add a grilled chicken breast to a salad or veggies from the salad bar to a sandwich or a wrap. Many colleges have multiple dining halls that may serve different foods and meals. Try all the dining halls to figure out which ones you like best.

What if I'm a vegetarian?

Most colleges offer vegetarian entrees at all meals such as veggie burgers, stir fries, and pasta dishes. Create your own vegetarian meal at the salad or sandwich bar by adding protein-rich ingredients such as eggs, hummus, beans, peanut butter, or cheese.

What if I have class during meals?

Food is the fuel your brain needs to help you think, so make time to eat. If you skip a meal, you may have trouble concentrating, get a headache, or feel like you didn't get very much out of your class. Even if you can't sit down for a full meal, pack a healthy_portable snack such as fruit, trail mix, a granola or energy bar, or a sandwich.

How can I maintain good nutrition?

Try to eat a variety of foods and don't skip meals. To get the most out of your meals, eat a balance of vegetarian proteins or lean meats, high fiber carbs, and healthy fats such as oils, nuts, and fish. The table below provides suggestions of foods to choose at meal times.

Instead Of	Try
Fried foods	Grilled or baked foods
Refined grains (such as white bread and white rice)	Whole grains (such as whole wheat bread and brown rice)
Whole milk	Low-fat milk or soy/Almond milk
French fries	Baked, sweet potato or a fist size of pasta/quinoa
Sweetened drinks	Water or seltzer
Sweetened desserts (such as cookies, cake, or ice cream)	Fruit

Nutrition 101: The Food Groups		
Food Group	Benefits	Nutrition Tip
Dairy & Dairy Substitutes	Build strong bones.	Have a serving of low-fat dairy such as milk, cheese, yogurt, or pudding 3 times a day.
Grains	Provide energy for muscles & brain.	Include grains such as rice, pasta, and bread at every meal. Choose whole grain options as often as possible.
Fats	Keep you feeling full.	Include some fat such as olive oil, guacamole, nuts, or seeds at every meal.
Fruits & Vegetables	Provide vitamins and minerals for healthy skin, hair, nails, and immune system.	Try having at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables such as apples, broccoli, pears, carrots, squash, or salad per day.
Proteins	Maintain muscle.	Try having fish, beans, eggs, tofu, peanut butter, chicken, or lean beef at 2 meals per day.

Using campus services can also help you maintain good nutrition. If you have any food allergies, food intolerances, or food preferences, talk to your campus food services director. Meet with your college nutritionist if you're experience weight or appetite changes.

Answers to Common Dorm Room Remedies

I have a meal plan, but always get hungry between meals and at night when I'm studying. What should I do?

Keep your room stocked with healthy snacks you can grab when you're hungry, such as:

- Brown rice cakes
- Crackers (whole grain)
- Fresh fruit
- High fiber cereal (>3 grams/serving)
- Oatmeal (packets)
- Popcorn (try single serving bag-low fat)
- Canned fruit in natural juices
- protein bars(>6 grams protein,>3 grams fiber)
- Granola bars
- Nuts (unsalted)
- Pita bread (whole wheat)
- Pudding
- Tuna fish

If you have a fridge, try:

- Baby carrots, broccoli florets, grape tomatoes, and/or celery
- Hummus
- String cheese
- Yogurt and smoothies
- Water, flavored seltzer waters, and low-fat milk

My friends order late night pizza, calzones, and wings. What should I do?

Don't deny yourself food if you are craving it, but don't over indulge either. Healthy eating is about moderation. If you skip meals, you may be more likely to overeat. However, even if you eat regular meals throughout the day, you may still be a little hungry at night, so it's okay to eat a regular portion of these foods, such as 1 or 2 slices of pizza, every once in a while.