

Eye on Campus

You are what you eat

Sometimes,
your diet can
get ignored

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College students aren't exactly famous for their healthy eating habits.

In fact, they are more renowned for the infamous "freshman 15" — the weight gain that sometimes sneaks up on students during their first year of college. College students often do not eat as well as they might because they are usually on a budget and pressed for time, and fast food and junk food are more convenient and less expensive than home-cooked meals.

College cafeterias sometimes aren't the epitome of healthy eating, as they peddle food such as greasy pizza and french fries smothered in imitation cheese. To most people, these foods are more appetizing than healthier options.

At Catherine's Café it's easy to see that most students are not getting their five servings of fruits and vegetables. Burgers and cheese fries are standard fare, while well-balanced lunches aren't on most students' lunch menus.

One glance at the cafeteria would make a nutritionist cringe.

Although Catherine's seems to make a good deal of its profit from selling foods loaded with cholesterol and saturated fat, owner Nick Logothetis says he would like to encourage students to eat healthily.

"There are healthy options available," he says. "(However) the problem is that we can't force students to choose those over cheesesteaks and pizza."

Catherine's is certainly not to blame for students' reluctance to stick to healthy eating habits. There exist many low-fat and nutritious foods at reasonable prices. Fresh fruit salad is available every day for 99 cents, and fat-free yogurt costs a dollar.

Healthier pre-packaged foods such as granola bars and fat-free pretzels are available. Soft pretzels, another low-fat snack, are only two for a dollar. Even some of the sandwiches are low in fat.

"Turkey is one of the healthier foods," says Logothetis. "It only has about one gram of fat (per serving)."

Roast beef and ham are among the other leaner choices for deli meat. And those sandwiches are also cheaper than cheesesteaks.

Students can also find healthy foods on campus outside of the cafeteria. The campus bookstore sells nutrition bars such as Power Bars and Luna Bars. They are low in fat and high in protein, vitamins, and minerals. They're also ideal for students who need to eat a quick meal right before class starts.

For students unsure about what foods they should be eating and want advice on eating better, Penn State Delco offers a healthy-eating program and free nutri-



Photo by Meredith Becker
Catherine's Cafe encourages students to eat healthily. The cafe offers a variety of healthy options including fruit cups, granola bars, salads, and low-fat lunch meats.

Healthy eating tips

- Reduce Fat Intake
- Increase complex carbohydrates and fiber.
- Reduce refined and simple carbohydrates.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of fluid per day.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine.
- Always eat a well-balanced breakfast.
- Don't skip meals.
- Include three food groups at each meal.
- Eat healthy snacks if meals are more than 5 hours apart.
- Limit what you eat at night.
- Maintain moderation when you eat out.
- Plan menus.
- Keep records of food intake and activity.

tional counseling.

Mary Ellen DiMatteo, M.S., R.D. runs the healthy-eating program, and she said that a lot of students don't realize that there is free counseling available.

"They should take advantage of it, because nutritional counseling can be very expensive," she said. "It can be as much as \$60 per hour (elsewhere)."

DiMatteo has a bachelor's degree in Nutrition, a master's in science in health education, and is a registered dietitian.

"The things I go over are based on research," she said. "We use practical strategies, not fad diets like the Atkins diet."

DiMatteo said that many students, including the ones who attend her counseling sessions, do not have healthy eating habits.

"A lot of students are skipping meals and not eating enough fruits and vegeta-

bles," she said. "It takes about 3-4 weeks to establish a habit of healthy eating, and (nutritional counseling) can help students to make changes in their diets."

According to DiMatteo, healthy eating can also help with stress management.

"We do a whole approach at looking at lifestyle and what we need to eat to beat stress," she said. "For example, some students may experience stress simply because they are not drinking enough water."

Students interested in the healthy-eating program can join the group, which meets in 201 Classroom Building Tuesdays from 12:00-12:40. They can also make individual appointments with DiMatteo Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Contact Mary Ellen DiMatteo at MED13@psu.edu.

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