

Climate likely cause of stones

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Salt cured country ham and iced tea on hot summer days may spell extra pain for Southerners.

Medical experts say kidney stones are more common in Southerners thanks to dehydration from hot weather and diets rich in meat, salt, tea and other foods that may lead to kidney stones.

"There's a 'stone belt' that covers the Southeast and we're the buckle," said Dr. David Schull, chief of urology at Saint Thomas Hospital in Nashville. "There's a lot of it around here. There's no doubt. It's a regional phenomenon." About 10 percent of

Americans can expect to pass a kidney stone at some point in their life. But the probability jumps to 15 percent for people who live in the South. No one knows exactly causes kidney stones to form, but experts agree diet and dehydration play a large role. Stones typically form when minerals and other substances in urine crystallize inside the kidney. When people don't consume enough liquids, their urine is more likely to have higher concentrations of such substances.

Foods such as meat, salt, tea, spinach, chocolate and nuts also contain kidney stone-causing substances, which may spur the development of stones, said Dr. Matthew

Hassan, a urologist with Urology Associates in Franklin.

Symptoms of kidney stones include sharp pains in the back or side as the stones work their way to the bladder. Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, bloody urine and a constant urge to urinate.

Most stones will pass through a person's body on their own within a few weeks because they are small—no larger than the tip of a pencil.

Larger stones that don't pass naturally are broken up either with lasers. Medical experts say the best way to avoid getting kidney stones is to drink plenty of fluids, especially water.

Universities aim to help new students avoid Freshman 15

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DURHAM — Sunny Dawson ran two miles every other day when she started her freshman year at the University of Southern California. But the lure of the cafeteria near her dorm became too much to resist.

"Everyone I know went crazy. Oh my God, pizza. Oh my God, ice cream," she said. Dawson soon stopped running and "started piling up the food in the cafeteria."

By Christmas break, the 5-foot-10 native of Haleiwa, Hawaii, had gained 10 pounds.

"I realized I don't have to be a victim of this and started making better choices," she said. "I ate a lot of salads and cut out sodas altogether. By spring break I was normal again. I was stoked."

As high school graduates start college this month and next, universities are offering a range of tools to help them avoid Dawson's mistake. While experts say the so-called "Freshman 15" is usually only 5 to 7 pounds, it's a common experience for many college newcomers faced with unlimited cafeteria food, late-night pizza binges and snacking that comes with irregular student schedules.

"The patterns and the habits that students get into in the first two to three months of school is what tends to carry them through the rest of their time on campus," said Jen Ketterly, nutrition and fitness coordinator for campus health services at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

At nearby Duke University, the private college of about 6,000 undergraduates offers an interactive nutrition workshop for freshmen with eating problems. It includes tips for quick, healthy meals in the dorm, and how to eat the right way in an all-you-can-eat dining hall. "A lot of kids really don't have a clue of what

they're not supposed to eat and what constitutes a healthy diet," says Jenny Favret, the nutrition manager at Duke's Eating Disorders Program.

The problem isn't always weight gain: Some new students lose weight because they're no longer getting three meals a day from Mom and Dad.

"Often times students have a very difficult schedule. They don't have enough time to eat (properly) so they eat a lot of snacks," said Joshua Solano, 20, of Florida, who'll be a junior at Duke this year. "I actually lost a little weight from my irregular eating habits."

Campus cafeterias have improved their menus over the years and now offer more healthy choices, such as salad bars, said Kim Dude, director of the Wellness Resource Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

"Then the issue is how to educate students on how to make the right choice," she said. At Missouri, students are trained to make presentations to their peers at residence halls, fraternities and sororities on eating healthy, handling stress, exercising and generally leading a healthy lifestyle, she said.

Social pressures also often intensify at college, where students have more opportunity to compare themselves with each other because they spend so much time together, officials at several schools said. The super-fit bodies that saturate TV shows and commercials can exacerbate such problems.

At Southern Cal, there are seminars for freshmen taught by USC professors that deal with messages that can lead to damaging self-images. One such class — "Impossible Bodies: Plastic Surgery as a New Social Problem" — explores the relationship between viewing plastic surgery reality shows to dissatisfaction over a particular body part.

Katrina's displaced carry on

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likes the choices — he can take a cooking class, a drama class. All they had in New Orleans, he said, was gym. His sister, Kristie, 16, made an instructional video about urban dance that turned heads.

Bessie Collins relies on a fixed income, and her 33-year-old daughter Crystal works at a nursing home. The government helps pay rent on two apartments — but the Collinses know the aid is not permanent.

There is a simple, woodcraft sign hanging in the three-bedroom apartment where Bessie lives. It was a gift to mark her 72nd birthday. It reads, "Bloom where God plants you."

"It means to survive where I am," the matriarch said. "I sure found that out."

They have survived where they are, for the most part, with the help of a prodigious stream of cash from the federal government, states, local entities and charities, which took in billions of dollars in donations in the months after the storm.

Through July, the Federal Emergency Management Agency had doled out \$4.15 billion in housing assistance to 947,404 applicants — counted by households, not individuals. More than 1.7 million households have applied for help, but some have been deemed ineligible — in many cases because of help they were getting from insurance claims — or referred to other programs for help, Federal Emergency Management Agency spokesman Adam Vogt said.

But it is states, local govern-

ments and charities that had the difficult task of helping the evacuees find jobs and schools and sometimes shelter. And their observations tell the story of widespread struggles.

In Omaha, Nebraska, the housing authority is still helping about 135 evacuees — some living in apartments with government help for rent, others in public housing. Most still have not found jobs, and many have lingering mental health issues, said Brad Ashford, executive director of the Omaha Housing Authority.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, city officials struggled to help evacuees who were off medications but had no medical records. Few of the 130 evacuees the city was helping at its peak were accustomed to the cold weather, or some were not even used to a structured life.

"Some were homeless where they came from," said Steve Falek, associate director of Milwaukee's housing authority. "If you live on the street, there are no rules that say you can't smoke in an elevator."

In Colorado, school officials have trouble planning for the upcoming school year because they have no idea how many kids to expect.

"So many families have returned. Oftentimes, some of the schools aren't ready for those back in the devastated areas, so they're remaining here," said Dana Scott, Colorado's coordinator for education of homeless children.

There are rough statistics, but there is no precise way to

track exactly how many refugees remain scattered throughout the country, and how many have returned to rebuild in Louisiana and Mississippi.

And in many cases, the evacuees haven't decided themselves — caught between pining for what they miss and trying to establish a new life in a strange place.

For some, there is no true home right now.

Timisha Speed, 26, believes she may stay in East Lansing, Michigan.

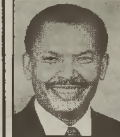
She has two young children — Anthony Mitchell Jr., 2, and Jakira Mitchell, born five weeks before Katrina came — and she is filling out paperwork for child-care services and looking for part-time work. But finding work in Michigan is difficult even for permanent residents: It has one of the nation's highest unemployment rates, over 6 percent.

"You're looking at people who have been taken out of everything they know, and they've got to start over," she says. "I feel blessed. But I'm dealing with it. I'm still dealing with it."

Rodney Francis knows he will settle in Dallas. There are things he and his wife, Tiffany, miss — back home in New Orleans, they could walk to most of his family's homes. Bus service in Dallas is far away. Their neighbors have barely acknowledged them.

Life since the storm has felt like a disorienting, unending vacation to him. And yet he is tired of the politics in New Orleans, the crime, the trash thrown into his yard from passing cars.

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It Could Be You

When we first start out on the pursuit of our dreams, it can be hard to believe that what we want can really come true. We are so used to hearing how difficult it can be to make it in this world. We hear that so often that at times we are almost convinced that there is no point in pursuing what may be something that we have wanted ever since we can remember.

People often give us reasons why what we want cannot happen. They may tell us that we do not have the money needed to invest in our dream. They may look at what we want and say that no one else will be interested in what we have to offer. Others may point out that there are already people who offer what we are interested in and that there will not be enough business for us to make it. The reasons people can give us for not trying to make our dreams come true can go on and on.

But the bottom line is this. Everything that we have in this world at some point started as somebody's dream. Just think about it. The very chair that you sit on began as someone's idea. The car that you drive started as someone dreaming of a way to get from one place to another more quickly

without the use of horses. The jetliners that we take for granted started as someone's dream of humans being able to fly. The air conditioner started as someone's dream of finding a way to make life much more comfortable during the hot and humid days of summer. The list could go on, of course. Just imagine what life would be like if we did not have these things in our lives.

Whatever it is that you dream of having in your life, resist the messages that try to persuade you to give up on your dream. Just keep in mind that if other people could make their dreams come true, why not you. Keep your heart and mind open to the creative powers of life, and you will find what you need to make your dreams come true. Who knows, it could very well be you who starts the next big trend or creates some kind of invention to fit a need that we all have just been waiting for!

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