

Fight the freshmen fifteen

An all-access pass to healthy dining options

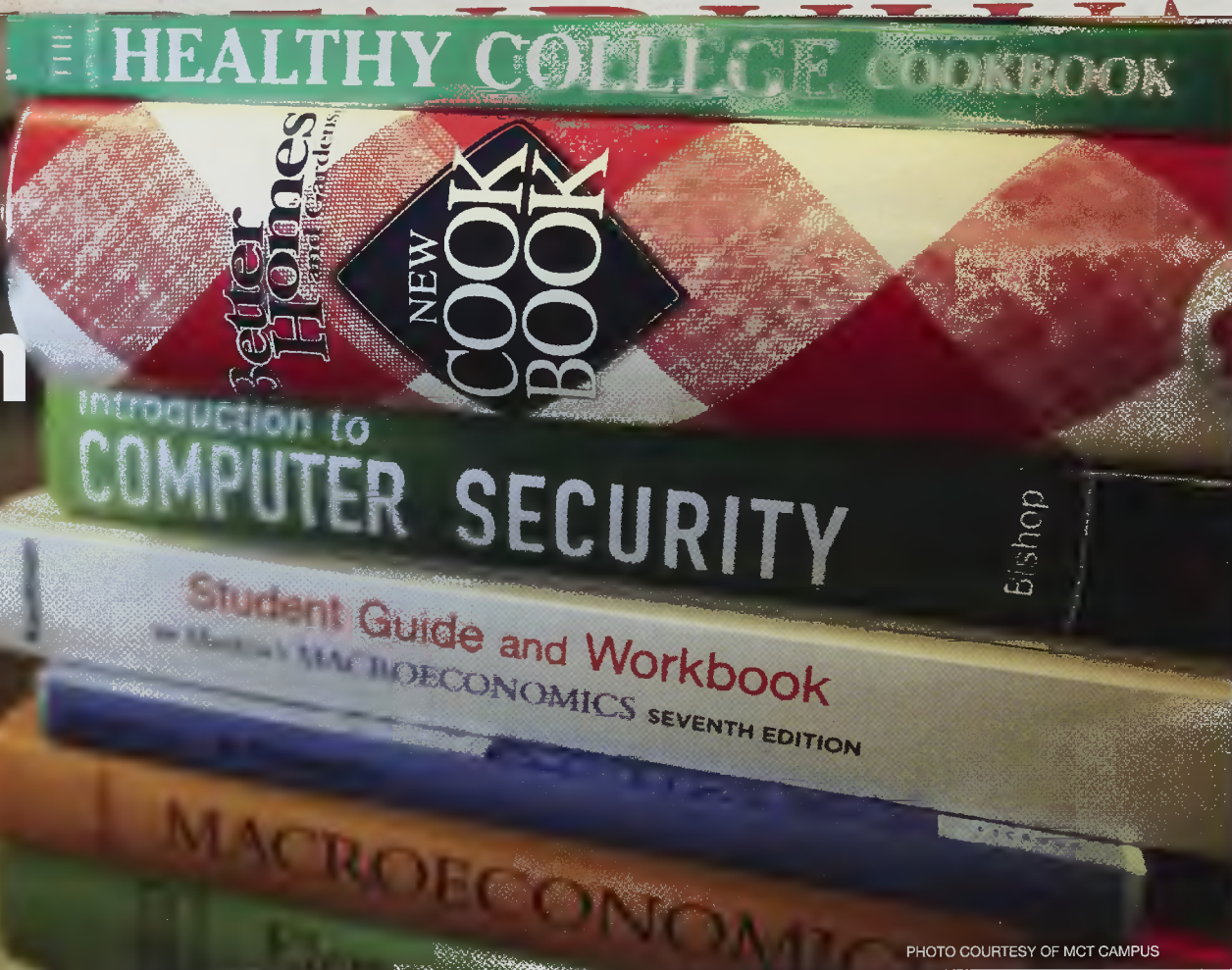


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The freshman fifteen - these words are daunting enough to send girls bee lining from a dorm room to the next group fitness class.

All-Access can be lethal if you don't know how to use it, but the meal plan also gives you all-access to healthy options. You just need to know how to navigate the system.

As you walk into Colonnades, an overwhelming aroma of chocolate desserts hits you from the right as the smell of pizza wafts your way from the left. A word to the wise: keep walking.

Colonnades is your one-stop shop for every meal, starting with breakfast. Among the array of chocolate muffins and bacon are plenty of healthy choices. A good rule of thumb is to eat foods as close to their natural state as possible. Opt for yogurt and fruit, oatmeal or a made-to-order omelet. Ask for egg whites or eggbeaters and pass on the meats and cheese. Pick up a slice of whole-wheat toast for some complex carbs to get your brain moving in the morning.

Lunch is the dining hall rush hour, as everyone flocks to squeeze a meal in between classes. This is where retail

meals come in handy. Pick up a veggie and hummus wrap from Varsity or make your own salad to go. Lower Colonnades' Fountain Market is also a popular grab-and-go lunch spot, home to Croutons and Boar's Head.

These made to order options put the power in your hands. Skip the cheese, bacon bits and fatty dressings. If oil and vinegar isn't your thing, other dressings will suffice as long as you use them in moderation.

Eating healthy doesn't have to be a complete diet makeover, but little changes will go a long way. Grabbing a banana in place of your daily bag of Lay's potato chips will save you about 60 calories and 10 grams of fat. If you make that sacrifice five times a week, you are already down 300 calories and 50 grams of fat. If you can't fathom giving them up, go for the Baked Lay's instead of the classic counterpart.

Last stop for any combo meal is a drink. Water, tea or coffee is your best bet here. Soda and other sugary drinks will only lead to a mid-afternoon crash.

Dinner is typically where the end-less, not-so-healthy options seem most tempting. It's 7:00 and your stomach's rumbling. The smell of hot pizza is almost impossible to resist, some kid just walked by with a cheesy quesadilla and your best

friend is calling you over to the pasta line. Don't let your growling stomach drown out the voice of reason.

To avoid sending your body straight into bottomless pit mode, check out the dining hall menu and nutrition information online before you head out to eat. That way, you can pre-plan your meal and know what you are getting yourself into.

For the most part, stick to foods that are grilled or baked instead of fried. When choosing carbs, look for whole grains, such as brown rice or whole-wheat pasta and bread. Pick lean protein instead of highly processed fatty ones. Think turkey and chicken breast over the burger or fried chicken. Beans, chickpeas and nuts are also good sources of protein.

Speaking from experience, every walk past the dessert bar gets easier as your self-control gets stronger. But for now, hold your head high, drop your plate off and keep walking. Only pause momentarily to grab an apple or orange on the way out.

For more information on healthy dining options, CampusDish has daily menus and corresponding nutritional information for Colonnades, McEwen, and all retail locations on campus.