

Students Should Take Time Out To Balance Diets, Doctors Say

BY LEANN SPRADLING
STAFF WRITER

Classes. Tests. Significant other. Jobs. Sleep.

With all these drains on a college student's time and energy, most students do not take time to exercise or plan a healthy diet. But diet and exercise can have as great an impact on a student's life as anything else.

"I don't see a lot of malnourished college students," said Carolyn Felton, a registered dietitian in Raleigh. "But I do see a lot who don't eat the best diet."

Susan Holliman, director of the Wellness Resource Center, said college students often thought they were already young and healthy and so were unmotivated to exercise or eat wisely.

She added that inconvenience and lack of time also made college students feel less concerned about diet.

"At home, people were used to someone planning meals, or they could cook," Holliman said. "At college, a lot of people don't have a car to get groceries and don't have time to cook, so they get fast food."

Felton said a lot of students ate only what was readily available because they did not have time to plan meals.

"We think of eating well as a hard thing to do. You just have to plan ahead," Felton said.

Instead of ordering fast food or a pizza, Felton suggests trying to keep foods on hand that are easy to prepare and store and are nutritious, such as cereal, milk, bagels, yogurt or fresh fruit.

Felton said that instead of just counting calories, people should think about the content of foods — whether they were high-fat or low-fat, high-fiber or low-fiber.

Holliman agreed that food content was more important than counting calories.

"Research shows that college students eat less fruits and vegetables than they need, so they're probably not getting enough fiber," she said.

"The most important single thing is to watch fat intake. Don't count calories, but consume high-fat foods occasionally rather than frequently."

A recent survey found that 61 percent of students were getting more than 30 percent of their calories from fat. Thirty percent is the maximum recommended percentage of calories from fat.

Other research shows that college students, as well as the general population, get too few vitamins and minerals as well as too much fat.

One survey found that out of a random sample of 21,000 people, not one person met the recommended dietary allowance for 10 essential nutrients.

"I haven't yet met a human being who's getting all the nutrients they need," said Ellen Marr, owner of Total Wellness Services in Raleigh. "Lots of people think the RDA is what we need, but actually it's the minimum we need to prevent disease."

"We're not even getting the minimum amounts that we need."

Marr believes everyone should take vitamin and mineral supplements to get needed nutrients.

"I think it's real critical to take supplements, but you have to be real careful. One-half to three-fourths of the supplements on the market aren't even useful because of how they're made. There are no govern-

Recommended Daily Allowances

Nutrient	For Men	For Women
Protein	60 g	55 g
Vitamin A	5,000 IU	5,000 IU
Vitamin D	400 IU	400 IU
Vitamin E	30 IU	25 IU
Ascorbic Acid	60 mg	55 mg
Folic Acid	4 mg	4 mg
Niacin	18 mg	13 mg
Riboflavin	1.6 mg	1.5 mg
Thiamin	1.4 mg	1 mg
Vitamin B-6	2 mg	2 mg
Vitamin B-12	5 µg	5 µg
Calcium	.8 g	.8 g
Phosphorus	.8 g	.8 g
Iodine	140 µg	100 µg
Iron	10 mg	18 mg
Magnesium	400 mg	350 mg

g = grams, mg = milligrams, µg = micrograms

ment regulations on supplements."

Marr suggests being sure that any brand of supplements has been clinically tested before taking it.

Supplements can help add calcium and iron, two minerals that college students generally are low on.

Felton said college students were still at an age at which they could store calcium in the body.

"It's like a bank account. You store calcium for a certain number of years, and then all you can do is withdraw. Lots of college students get into drinking coffee or tea or soft drinks, and a couple of cups of milk a day can make a big difference."

Iron is a major deficiency in American women, Holliman said. "They may not realize why they feel tired or cold or have no energy."

"Especially now, people who are trying

Holliman said people might gain weight in college because their bodies had reached the mature stage. "You may have a decrease in the amount of calories you need."

The average college-age man needs about 2,900 calories per day, and the average college-age woman needs about 2,200 calories.

Eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia often show up in college, Felton said.

"There's a message out to young women that if you're not slender, you're worthless," she said.

"If you look at ads in magazines, someone has spent four hours getting a woman ready for that one picture. That's not what a real woman looks like. We need it to get it into perspective."

Marr said that just as people with eating disorders were influenced by societal ideas, so were people trying to eat well.

"Anybody can eat healthy. It's based on a willingness to be different from the average person."

"For college students, the solution is to be willing to ask for something different and to be aggressive."

Marr said exercise as well as diet was important for a healthy lifestyle.

"I work with a lot of athletes who are really into working out but don't pay attention to nutrition, and I see a lot of people who are really into eating healthy, but they don't move their bodies."

Marr believes college students should work out three to four times a week for at least half an hour. The fitness routine should include some aerobic exercise and some exercise to improve flexibility, muscular strength and endurance.

Some students might get the exercise they need just from their daily activity, Felton said. "If a person lives in a dorm two miles from classes and walks vigorously or bikes to class instead of just strolling along, that's sufficient exercise."

Holliman said exercise could be recreational, like tennis or racquetball. "It doesn't have to be 40 minutes of aerobics. Think of it as a habit instead of an ordeal. Hopefully, the new Student Recreation Center will help people who don't have the money to join a spa."

Students wanting to learn more about diet and exercise can visit the Wellness Resource Center in the new SRC. The center offers one-on-one consultation on diet and exercise with graduate students from the nutrition and exercise physiology departments.

The FIT Stop at the center assesses the fitness level of students and checks them for progress six to eight weeks later.

"That helps with motivation, to see decreased body fat or an increase in the number of push-ups you can do," Holliman said.

"The important thing is not to wait until after college to develop healthy lifestyle habits."

Marr said she believed almost all college students could improve their lifestyle habits.

"Nutrition affects energy, concentration and stamina. You get a bunch of college kids who are constipated and have acne and feel lethargic, and they wonder why."

"It's real easy. It's because of what they're eating."



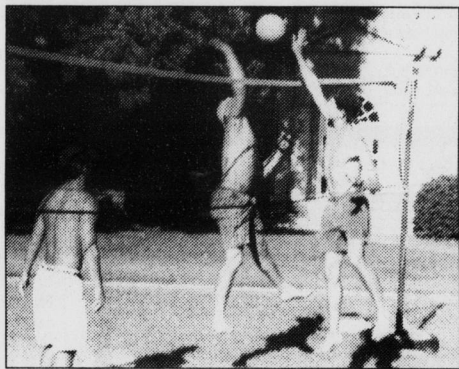
Get the Facts On Keeping Fit

Suggested Weights

Height	Acceptable Weight	Obese	Grossly Obese
4'9"	93-117	141	187
4'10"	93-119	143	190
4'11"	95-121	146	194
5'	97-126	150	198
5'1"	97-128	154	205
5'2"	112-141	170	225
5'3"	115-143	172	229
5'4"	117-146	174	232
5'5"	119-148	176	234
5'6"	124-157	187	249
5'7"	128-161	194	258
5'8"	130-163	196	260
5'9"	137-170	203	269
5'10"	141-174	210	278
5'11"	143-176	212	282
6'	146-181	216	287
6'1"	152-190	227	302
6'2"	157-194	234	311
6'3"	161-198	238	318
6'4"	165-205	247	331

Recommended Food Group Servings

Food Group	Servings per day
Dairy products	Two cups
Leafy, green or orange vegetables	One or more servings of 1/2 cup or more
Citrus fruits, tomatoes, berries, raw cabbage, salad greens	One serving of 1/2 cup
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, legumes	At least one serving
Bread or cereals	At least two servings of whole grain, enriched
Potatoes, fruits, other vegetables	Three or more servings
H ₂ O Water	One to two glasses in addition to regular beverages



DITH/JASON KIRK

to eat right and don't eat red meat may not get enough iron."

Vegetarians need to watch nutrition carefully, Felton said. "It's really healthful if you do it well. Often I'll see a person who has cut out all flesh, but they're eating so much cheese they're hurting their health."

Smokers and people who drink alcohol also have special nutritional needs. Smoking depletes certain B-vitamins and vitamin C, and alcohol depletes B-complex vitamins.

"Alcohol is one of those foods that gives lots of calories but no nutrients," Felton said. "If you drink one beer a day for a week, you gain a pound."

Some students come to college with average weights but gain 10 or 15 pounds, Felton said.

'I'm Gonna Live Forever': College Students and Their Health Myths

BY AMY SWAN
STAFF WRITER

It will never happen to me. I have plenty of time. Everybody's doing it.

For many college students, these are the reasons behind many an act of risky behavior. Anything from not getting enough sleep to alcohol abuse is fair game for the under-25 crowd. Why?

"It's all a part of being young and not associating risk with behavior," said Debra King of Orange Person Chatham Central Health.

"We don't realize that there's a cause-effect type of relationship in the world, and that's when we really get into trouble."

Many area psychologists agreed. They said college students simply did not look a few years down the road and did not consider how their actions would affect those around them.

In addition, many young adults overlook the fine details of everyday life and instead seek out that "high" that comes from breaking the rules.

In the case of substance abuse, the high can become addictive, both physically and emotionally.

So addictive that many students think they cannot have fun without alcohol or drugs.

"You don't gain more social skills by drinking alcohol. You feel more comfortable," King said.

"The problem there is you haven't increased your social skills — you've dulled your senses."

"If people start to drink, they need to drink more and more to get the same effect.

"I think all too often, an incident has to hit pretty close to home for a person to personalize it and realize it could happen to them. Or sometimes it takes having it happen to them."

MARGARET HENDERSON
Director of Orange County
Rape Crisis Center

Their body's building up a tolerance," she said.

Lee White, a freshman from New Bedford, Mass., noted the impact of peer pressure.

Just because it's the thing to do, everybody does it, she said.

How students are perceived by their peers can affect their decisions on just about anything in a college environment.

Whether a student wears a bicycle helmet, for instance, often is determined by appearances.

"The reason most kids don't wear them is because they don't look cool," said John Koestler, a salesmen at Franklin Street Cyclery.

Students who just use their bikes to get to and from class probably do not consider themselves serious cyclists, so they do not think they need a helmet, he said.

"Probably on campus and on Franklin Street, where there are a lot of cars, is

where they'd need a helmet the most," Koestler said.

Most professional racing organizations are requiring helmets, so it is becoming more and more common to see recreational bicyclists wearing them, he said.

The people who require the least amount of convincing when it comes to helmet-wearing are those who have seen or heard about accidents in which the rider would have been killed if they had not been wearing protective headgear, Koestler said.

Students tend to use the same sort of logic when it comes to the risk of rape, said Margaret Henderson, director of Orange County Rape Crisis Center.

"I think all too often an incident has to hit pretty close to home for a person to personalize it and realize it could happen to them," Henderson said.

"Or sometimes it takes having it happen to them."

Henderson said it was especially easy for freshmen to trust a person they met at a party or in class.

Many students forget that acquaintance rape happens far more often than stranger rape, and they put themselves in risky situations.

"It takes a while to figure out how to set your own boundaries for personal safety," Henderson said.

Henderson said that while the rape crisis center could educate men and women about ways of avoiding potentially violent situations, they could not prevent rape from happening.

"We can never be completely safe as individuals, but we can do things to maximize our personal safety," she said.

Using the buddy system, avoiding isolated areas and sacrificing spontaneity in

among the college population. Carolyn Miller, director of clinical services for Planned Parenthood of Orange and Durham Counties, said 30 percent of the Chapel Hill clinic's patients were college students.

"In the past several years, people generally are using condoms with another method of birth control," she said.

Dr. John Power, director of gynecology at Student Health Services, said students just needed to remember that "just about any-

thing is possible when it comes to sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy."

Another myth popular with students is that "my health will take care of itself without me having to pay attention," said Chapel Hill psychotherapist Victoria Tackett.

Despite hearing about the so-called "freshman 15," many students still consider pizza one of the major food groups and think the walk from South Campus is a good workout.

"It's really easy to gain weight because a lot of people aren't eating on a regular schedule," White said.

"There's no one around, like your parents, to help you eat healthfully."

Susan Holliman, director of the University's Wellness Resource Center, said students did not realize that what they eat now could affect them in the future.

She noted that research had shown that as early as age 7, people started acquiring cholesterol, so college was the perfect opportunity to develop healthy eating and exercise habits.

Students think they will have more time to exercise when they are out of school, but they do not realize how much harder it is to build exercise into their schedules when they are on their own, she said.

From physicians to counselors, the experts agree: College students, as a group, are prone to engaging in risky behavior.

As Henderson of the rape crisis center said, "Because of the activities in a college student's life, they may encounter more situations in which they are at risk."

The advice offered to students: Be aware, and think before you act.

