How do eating habits change in college?

The eating habits of new college students may change once classes begin. A student may gain or lose weight. College cafeterias, buffets and easy access to food 24 hours a day make it tempting to overeat or not make the healthiest food choices. Gaining an average of 15 pounds is commonly referred to as the “freshman 15.”

Alternatively, a student may not eat enough because of stress or other reasons.

Eating disorders are serious medical problems. Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder are all types of eating disorders. Eating disorders frequently develop during adolescence or early adulthood, but can occur during childhood or later in adulthood. Young women are more likely than men to develop an eating disorder.

Eating disorders are more than just a problem with food. Students should consider the following:

> Determine if your eating habits could be improved.
> Visit a health clinic or talk to a nutritionist or dietitian about ways to improve your diet.
> If you or someone you know is showing signs of an eating disorder, get help. If you suspect a friend has an eating disorder, tell him or her about your concerns. Ask him or her to talk to a counselor or doctor who knows about eating issues, and offer to go along to the appointment. Let your friend know you are there for him or her.
> Talk to someone you can trust, such as a parent, doctor, counselor, religious leader or teacher.

Additional Information

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