

# The Real Skinny

## on the FRESHMAN 15

By Amy Harris



**T**hree times a day Carla eats a buffet style meal. Standing there with a plate in her hand she piles on pasta, a hotdog, some fries and a side salad. What she's doing is no different than what all of her peers are doing. Carla is a freshman living in the dorms and her only option is to eat this way every single day.

**I**t's a commonly known fact that every freshman entering college struggles to avoid the dreaded "freshman 15." Luckily, better news is on the way. According to ongoing research at Cornell University, students tend to

gain an average of four pounds a semester – that's about eight pounds their freshman year.

This eight pound average shows that few students actually gain the clichéd fifteen pounds. Freshman psychology major Kristina Hernandez said her friends have not experienced drastic weight changes since coming to college. "Everyone's gained about the same amount of weight. We've all put on between two to five pounds," Hernandez said.

**S**o why do freshman tend to gain more weight than the rest of us? No, it's not those crazy adolescent hormones. Unlimited access to food coupled with newfound freedom might have something to do with it. Jessie Hofius, student food-service manager at UC Davis, is all too familiar with the reasons behind freshman food choice. "Freshmen tend to gain weight because the dining halls offer 'all you can eat' and mom is not there to tell them to eat the veggies over the pizza. Some people eat pizza every night," Hofius said.

It's not only conventional food that's packing on the pounds. Alcohol is prevalent in and around most college campuses and many people are unaware of the effect alcohol can have on their waistline. It is possible for a person to drink an entire day's worth of calories and not even realize it.

**E**ven those students with the best intentions may still experience rising numbers on the scale. Food in the dorms is produced for a large number of people and oftentimes has hidden sodium and fat that the students aren't aware of. In order to avoid these types of traps, look for healthy alternatives. "At UC Davis, low fat and fat

**"Eat soup or salad before eating the main course"**

free alternatives are offered. Nothing we serve is fried anymore and we have signs next to each food item indicating if it's a healthy option," Hofius said. Simply being aware of what you're eating and how much you're eating will help you attain your desired weight.

**B**oth inside and outside the cafeteria there are things freshmen can do to fend off the pounds. CSU Chico foodservice professor and registered dietitian Stephanie Bianco-Simeral offers simple advice. “In the dorms, fill up on lower calorie items. Drink water or diet drinks and eat soup or salad before eating the main course. Wait awhile before going back for more food,” Bianco-Simeral said. Most people don’t realize they’re full until twenty minutes after they’ve finished eating. So take your time and savor each bite.

Simple yet effective tips are often overlooked that could be essential to your success. “Eat only when you’re hungry, exercise, and get more sleep. The more sleep you get, the less caffeine you’ll need and thus the less soda you’ll end up drinking,” said Hernandez.

**I**t might not be enough to simply focus on the food. Make it a point to explore your surroundings, go for a hike, walk downtown, or simply utilize the free on-campus gym.

Many college freshmen gain weight because they are no longer involved in the sports they used to play in high school.

Sophomore biology major Courtney Silver encourages more students to get active and take advantage of all their school has to offer. “I actually lost weight my freshman year because I walked everywhere and took free on-campus workout classes,” Silver said.

In addition to looking great, you’ll feel better about yourself and your body. Just remember, don’t be too harsh on yourself. Your weight may fluctuate but you’re still the same amazing person on the inside. Moderation is key so go out there, enjoy college and happy eating!

### Helpful Tips

**\*Get plenty of sleep**

**\*Exercise**

**\*Limit soda consumption**

**\*Eat only when hungry**

**\*Make healthy food choices**

**\*Minimize late night snacking**