Ten Tips for Nutritious Eating at College

1. Drink at least 10 glasses of water each day. This keeps your body properly hydrated and helps prevent overeating. Be careful when consuming energy drinks, sodas, and flavored coffees, which often contain high amounts of fat, sugar, calories, and caffeine.

2. Try for three servings of dairy each day—milk, yogurt, cheese, or cottage cheese. These foods help ensure your body gets enough calcium. If you don’t like dairy, try soy-based foods or consider asking your health provider about a calcium supplement.

3. Choose lean proteins and include red meats at least three times a week to ensure you are getting adequate amounts of iron. College athletes are especially prone to poor iron levels. If animal protein is not a part of your diet, look for foods fortified with iron and drink or eat a food high in vitamin C (like orange juice, tomatoes, or strawberries) to help with iron absorption. If you’re frequently feeling sluggish or tired, consider having your iron levels checked.

4. Choose five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day. These nutrient-rich foods are essential in every diet.

5. Include nuts and seeds in your diet. These foods contain healthy fats that can protect your blood vessels. A healthy amount of fat in one’s diet is about five to six teaspoons each day. Limit fried or breaded foods to twice a week.

6. Keep portion sizes moderate. Sometimes large packages of foods, oversized plates and bowls, and supersized portions can trick you into eating more than you are actually hungry for.

7. Make time for some type of breakfast every day. This is the best way to jump start your metabolism and improve your concentration.

8. Stock your room with healthy snacks that might include fruits and veggies, cheese and crackers, fruit snacks, small packs of cereal, yogurt, etc. Having healthy items available helps you to avoid less nutritious items like chips and candies when you get the late-night munchies.

9. Have a plan to combat emotional eating. Make a list of three or more things you can do when you find yourself eating due to boredom, sadness, anxiety or stress.

10. Include 30 minutes of physical activity in every day. The exercise will keep your metabolism high, strengthen your muscles, and reduce your stress all at the same time.