on or off campus, make yourself familiar with the menu items so that you can select better options. Do not be a heavy drinker. We are often quite aware of every bite of food that goes into our mouths, but we absent-mindedly drink a whole meal’s worth of calories without noticing. Frou-frou coffees, many smoothie drinks, energy drinks, soft drinks, and alcohol all contain large amounts of sugar and empty calories (those that have little nutritional value). Even fruit juices are laden with calories, so eating the fruit is a better option. Plain water is the best beverage to drink both for its zero calorie impact and for its value in our bodies.

Of course, the college experience would not be the same without the occasional burger and fries or pizza with friends, but the idea is not to overdo on those kinds of foods. Learning to make smart choices for yourself will permeate all aspects of your life, so if you can master your health, you can master the academic demands of college. Be healthy. Be happy. Be successful.

The “Freshman 15” is a term referring to the fact that college students tend to pack on some pounds when they go off to college. Of course, not every college student gains 15 pounds (the average is about 5) just because they are in college, but it is important to think about this major lifestyle change so that you can make healthful choices for yourself.

Going to college, and especially doing well in college, means that you must spend much more of your time in class and preparing for class. Even if you have just come to college directly from high school, the expectations go up tremendously. Making changes to how you must study for certain classes, and spending more time engaged in study and preparation, means that you might not have as much time for physical activity. Even if your weight is not an issue, regular physical activity is still important because it helps your body stay in peak working condition and it helps reduce stress. Plan to get at least 30 minutes of exercise every day (park in a spot the farthest from the building and walk in briskly; then make a quick walk around the mile path on the first floor).

With the increased demand on your time comes the tendency to grab whatever food is the fastest (and cheapest). This usually equates to consuming more calories with less nutritional value to keep you going. Try to schedule a block of time somewhere between classes so that you can eat and relax. This will help keep your blood sugar levels steady so that you do not get overly hungry later in the day. When we are starving, we want to eat fast and we want to eat a lot. Do not let yourself get to that place, and you will have better control over what goes into your tummy.

One way to save time and money while still eating more healthful foods is to plan and bring your own lunches. Keep bags of salad, carrot and celery stick, whole grain bread, and lean lunch meats, yogurts, and other such foods on hand so that you can put together a balanced lunch the night before and bring it to campus with you. If you are buying something on or off campus, make yourself familiar with the menu items so that you can select better options.

Do not be a heavy drinker. We are often quite aware of every bite of food that goes into our mouths, but we absent-mindedly drink a whole meal’s worth of calories without noticing. Frou-frou coffees, many smoothie drinks, energy drinks, soft drinks, and alcohol all contain large amounts of sugar and empty calories (those that have little nutritional value). Even fruit juices are laden with calories, so eating the fruit is a better option. Plain water is the best beverage to drink both for its zero calorie impact and for its value in our bodies.

If you are tired, hungry, and in a hurry, fast food is appealing even if it is less healthful for you.

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**Tips for Making Healthy Lunches**

Many of us think about trying to eat more healthful and balanced meals, but trying to think about those while we juggle school and work and families and friends often just overwhelms us. So, we settle for grabbing the usual burger and fries or something from the vending machine because those items are always fast and available. With a little bit of planning, however, we can enjoy a lunch that is tasty and good for us (and much less expensive than buying something on the run).

When thinking about a meal that will carry us through our day and into dinner, the key is balance. A solid meal should contain some kind of lean protein and whole grains. It can be rounded out with fresh vegetables and fruit. If putting together a salad or making a sandwich, do not be shy with the veggies. An assortment of greens, sprouts, olives, cucumbers, and tomatoes will increase your fiber intake and make you feel fuller while enhancing the flavor of your meal.

Sandwiches and salads are not your only options, however. Almost anything that you enjoy at home can be packaged and taken with you for lunch. Consider what you are going to prepare each night for dinner, and make a little extra to take for lunch the next day. You can also make a large batch of a favorite meal on the weekend and portion it out to freeze for upcoming lunches.

Foods such as hard boiled eggs, lean lunch meats, canned tuna or salmon, pre-packaged salad mix, and such can be kept in the refrigerator ready to have as a quick snack or pulled together as a lunch.

Making your own lunch is not only more cost effective and tasty, but it also allows you to have better control over sodium and fat content and over portion size. If you have dinner out, ask for a to-go box at the beginning of the meal so that you can set aside a portion for lunch the next day.

If you are not accustomed to thinking about your meals until you are hungry and wondering what to eat, it might take a bit of effort to get yourself into the mode of pre-planning. You will likely find that after making lunch in advance a few times that it becomes second nature to you. Since you will save money by making your lunches at home and taking them with you, you'll be able to afford a splurge every now and then.

Do not forget to also plan for snacks if your days will stretch on for a long period of time. One of the reasons we sometimes overeat is that we have tried to go too long between meals. In order to stay balanced and focused, we do not need energy drinks which are expensive and can be harmful to us; we need a light snack such as a handful of nuts, fresh fruit, low fat yogurt, or veggie sticks with hummus or peanut butter. Including healthful snacks in the days' eating plan is especially important for you if you have diabetes. Not eating in an attempt to lower your blood glucose can actually cause a rise in glucose levels. Eating small meals with snacks will offer a better result.

### Healthy Matters

A healthful lunch doesn't have to be complicated, expensive, or boring.

**Sneaky Ways to be more Active**

Many of us know that we need to be more active, but who has time for that? Healthy levels of activity do not require intense hours of training. You can actually sneak it into your everyday routine.

Walking is one of the best activities that just about everyone can engage in. Instead of trolling the parking lot looking for the spot closest to the door, park at the far end of the lot and walk briskly into the building. OCCC has a 1.04 mile indoor walking path. Make a quick trip around the building once or twice to energize yourself and get your blood flowing.

Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Besides being faster on most days, it also gives you a great workout.

Visit Recreation and Fitness. Using the weight room and general fitness areas, including an Olympic size pool, is free with your student ID. You can also enroll in fitness classes for a nominal fee. The facility offers a nice way to distress while getting more fit.

Clean and organize your room or apartment. Cleaning burns more calories than most people realize, and you get the added benefit of having an organized work area for your studies.

Make new friends and join (or start) an intramural team. Being active can be more fun when friends are involved. Instead of just flopping on the couch at the end of the day, get up and dance during commercials. You can still watch your favorite shows, but you will now benefit from them.
**Other Influences on Weight**

**Sleep.** Most of us do not get enough of this, and it costs us in a lot of ways. One of those costs is weight gain. Sometimes it is necessary to burn the midnight oil, so to speak, but do not make it a habit.

**Stress.** Stress activates a whole set of hormones that can negatively affect our weight. We tend to sleep less and medicate ourselves more with comfort foods. Learn more healthful ways to reduce stress and to cope with it better.

**Your dishes.** Yep, it is true. Our dishes and utensils influence the way we view the food we are eating. We tend to feel fuller if our plates are fuller, so downsize the plates and you will be able to downsize the amount you want to eat.

**Servings.** Multi-serving packages can be anyone’s downfall in eating. If we eat (chips, cookies, take-out) out of a bag or box, our brains just want to believe that the package is a serving. Make a point of taking an actual serving out of the bigger container and putting it on a smaller one (then, put the bigger one away).

**Medications.** Some meds can cause weight gain or make it more difficult to lose weight. They may also change your body shape. If you have recently begun taking a new medication and noticed that your weight is creeping up, talk to your doctor.

**Muscle/fat ratio.** Muscle weighs more than fat although fat takes up more space. Do not let the scale be the only measure you use in determining your fitness. As you convert fat to muscle, the number on the scale may go up.

**Age.** As we age, our metabolic rate slows down. This means we can eat the same and gain weight. We have to eat less or exercise more to compensate.

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**Counting Calories? Don’t Forget the Ones You Drink**

Some people are meticulous about recording every bite of food that crosses their lips. They read every label to compare caloric and fat content, check carbohydrate servings, and portion out each meal so that they have the best control possible on their eating. What they often fail to take into account, however, is how many calories and how much fat pass through their lips in the form of beverages. Plain water is the absolute best option of beverage whether you want to lose weight or just maintain your health. Water is necessary to flush toxins from our bodies, to keep our cells adequately hydrated, and to help us stay balanced and focused throughout the day.

A 12 ounce Starbucks caffe latte made with *nonfat* milk will hit you with 120 calories and 18 grams of carbohydrates. Imagine the impact of one of their truly “frou-frou” drinks with the whipped cream on top. Yes, they are yummy, but maybe you are better off having one as an occasional treat and not a regular every morning kind of drink.

Fruit juices are no better in terms of carbohydrate and calorie load. A standard serving of juice is between 6 and 8 ounces (and who drinks that little). One serving of unsweetened apple juice contains 117 calories and 29 grams of carbs. A serving of unsweetened orange or grape juice contains 112 calories and 27 carbs and 155 calories and 38 carbs, respectively. Few people actually check to see if they are drinking juice with no sugar added. It is better for you to eat the fruit than to drink the juice because the fiber content in the whole fruit offsets the carb load.

How do some other popular beverages compare (based on a 12 ounce serving)? Bottled sweet tea typically contains between 129 and 143 calories; a regular soda can have as many as 190 calories, and many soft drink bottles contain two servings instead of one; whole milk has 220 calories, but do not think that you get a good deal on 2% or even 1%. Those varieties have about 183 and 154, respectively.

Sports drinks and energy drinks are both popular with many of you. While there are low calorie/low carb versions of each, regular sports drinks contain about 100 calories and energy drinks contain about 160.

The most important part of your decision making is to read labels and fit your beverage choices into your overall meal plan for the day. If you absolutely need to have that jumbo smoothie, make an adjustment in the others foods and drinks you are having. You can also increase your activity level to burn off the extra calories.
Student Support Services houses a variety of services designed to enhance the performance and well-being of students at Oklahoma City Community College. All services are confidential and free to current students.

- Services to Students with Disabilities, including providing accommodations for documented disabilities, interpreting and captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing students, and assistive technology.

- Professional counseling by licensed providers.

- Learning support specialists to assist with academic needs such as learning styles, study skills, test-taking, and general health and wellness issues.

- TRIO Grant Programs (Upward Bound and Trio Student Support Services) designed to help first generation college students learn more about college before they arrive and how to be more successful once they are here.

For more information about our services and how to access them, please visit our website at http://www.occc.edu/support/ or call us at 682-7520. We are located on the first floor of the Main Building near SEM Entry 3.

Yummy Honey Chicken Kabobs

Kabobs are a fun and tasty way to sneak vegetables into your family’s meal, and they are easy to prepare and grill.

1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/3 cup honey
1/3 cup soy sauce
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
8 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves cut into 1-inch cubes
2 cloves garlic
5 small onions, cut into 2-inch pieces
2 red bell peppers, cut into 2-inch pieces
Fresh mushrooms, if desired
Cherry tomatoes, if desired
Skewers

In a large bowl, whisk together oil, honey, soy sauce, and pepper. Before adding chicken, reserve a small amount of marinade to brush onto kabobs while cooking. Place the chicken, garlic, onions, and peppers (also the tomatoes and mushrooms, if desired) into the bowl. Marinade in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours (Can be put in the day before).

Preheat the grill for high heat.

Drain marinade from the chicken and vegetables and discard the marinade. Thread the chicken and vegetables alternately onto the skewers.

Lightly oil the grill grate. Place the skewers on the grill. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes, until chicken juices run clear. Turn and brush with reserved marinade frequently.

Per serving:
178 calories
45 milligrams cholesterol
1 gram fiber
442 milligrams sodium
12.4 grams carbohydrates
6.6 grams fat
17.4 grams protein

Options:
- Use low-sodium soy sauce to reduce the overall amount of sodium in the dish.
- If you don’t have a grill or if the weather is bad, these may be cooked in the broiler.
- This dish can also be cooked in a wok or large skillet and placed on top of rice.