

From the Nutritionist

Andrea Hart, RDN, CDN



How to Eat Well in College

Do you find it difficult to eat a healthy diet? Are you confused about which foods are nutritious? Are you overwhelmed by the choices in the dining halls? If so, you're not alone. It's rather common for students to have some difficulties with their eating habits as they transition to college. Confusion about nutrition, endless food choices, and busy schedules are just a few of the challenges students face when it comes to healthy eating. There are many healthy options available at SUNY Cortland, but it helps if you know how to navigate the dining halls.

Here are a few tips that can help you eat well on campus:

- **Balance your plate** - As often as possible, create a balanced meal containing all the food groups. Use the MyPlate symbol to help: Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, balance them with whole grains and lean protein, and add a serving of dairy. Look for the MyPlate symbol in the dining facilities to help you remember.
- **Consider your options** - You have a lot of foods to choose from at Neubig and The Bistro. Before you start grabbing everything that looks good, take a moment to check out all the options and make a plan for what you're going to eat. Start with one food item that is most appealing to you and build a balanced plate around it.
- **Pace yourself** - With an unlimited meal plan you can go to Neubig and The Bistro as often as you choose. Avoid the temptation to stuff yourself every time you go. Don't think of it as "all you can eat," think of it as "all you care to eat."
- **Be informed** - At all the dining halls, you'll find Calories, fat, protein, allergens and other nutrition information to help you make informed decisions about what to eat. You'll also see symbols which help you find vegetarian, vegan, and gluten friendly foods, as well as our healthy choices - foods that meet our own strict criteria for being low in calories, fat, saturated fat, and sodium, while also high in nutrients.
- **Think about your drink** - Drinking a lot of sweet coffee drinks, sodas, alcoholic beverages, or even juice can add hundreds of calories to your daily intake. Be sure to drink plenty of water each day and limit your intake of caloric beverages.
- **Treat yourself** - Having a healthy diet means that most of the foods you eat are nutritious, but it doesn't mean that everything you put in your mouth has to be full of nutrition. All foods can fit in a healthy eating plan - what matters is how much, and how often you eat them. When you do have an occasional treat, enjoy it!

For more information about healthy eating, come to the Wellness Wednesday program, "How to Eat Well in College," on September 23 at 7:30 PM in the Corey Union Exhibition Lounge.

Andrea Hart, registered dietitian nutritionist and New York State-certified dietitian/nutritionist, is available for free, confidential, one-on-one counseling and as a speaker or facilitator for campus groups, panels or classes.

Contact Andrea: andrea.hart@cortland.edu or call 607-753-5773 with questions or to set up an appointment. Or stop by her office, first floor, Neubig Hall, across from the Neubig Dining cashier.