

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.
- **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 a residential 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 menu boards with calories, fat, protein, allergens and other nutrition information to help you make informed decisions about what to eat. You'll also see symbols to help you find foods that are vegetarian, gluten friendly, and kosher style.
- **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.
- **Snack wisely.** Snacking can be a great way to fuel your body between meals. Choose foods from several food groups at each snack to give your body energy and nutrients it needs.
- **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, even treats — what matters is how much, and how often you eat them. When you do have an occasional treat, enjoy it!

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.