

# Exercise prevents 'freshman 15'

The University's Health Education Center can help students maintain healthy eating habits

By Sarah Skidmore  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Eating more pizza, drinking more beer and, as a result, gaining weight, are changes some freshmen experience.

The notorious weight gain thanks to unhealthy eating habits associated with the first year away from home is just one more worry to add to a freshman's list.

"The fear is realistic," said Annie Dochnal, a Peer Health Education Coordinator at the Student Health Center.

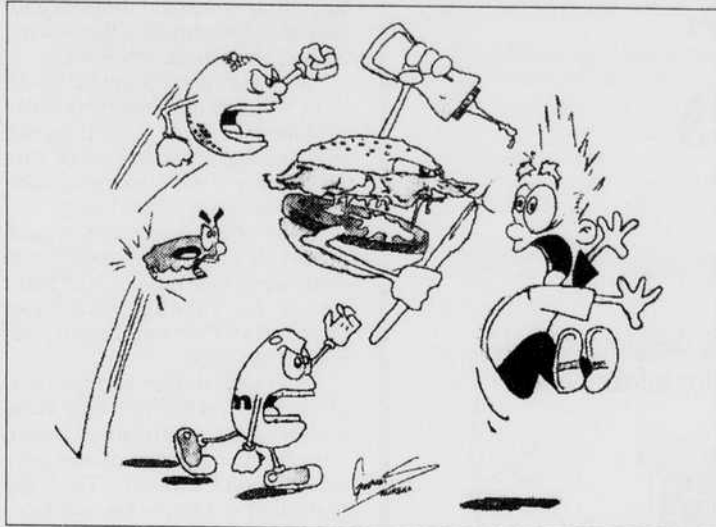
Many factors contribute to the possible weight gain, she said. Having food readily available, making independent food choices and eating because of stress contribute to poor eating habits.

"Eating habits change," senior Amy Juve said. "You don't have your mom cooking for you anymore. Plus, you are not exercising enough."

The "freshman 15" does not have to become a reality. Making good choices and staying physically active are important to maintaining a healthy weight, Dochnal said.

The new environment is a big adjustment for freshmen, she said. Specifically, eating in the dining halls is a change from eating at home. The residence halls do offer many options for nutrition-focused students.

Freshman Robin Waldvogel is pleased with the Carson cafete-



Giovanni Salimena/Emerald

ria. "I like having a choice, but I can definitely see how you could eat a lot," she said.

Students have to regulate their own eating, Dochnal said.

"They are in an environment that is not as restrictive as home," she said.

This new skill can take a little time to develop, and any weight gain is frequently temporary, Dochnal said.

Weight gain should not be the primary concern for freshmen.

"Gaining some weight is not as problematic as a lack of physical activity," she said. "Physical activity is a greater indicator of well being than weight."

The University offers a number of classes and recreational options. Organizations such as Physical Activity and Recreation

Services, Recreation and Intramurals and Club Sports provide opportunities for physical activity.

"I think if I keep active enough, the weight should not come on and stay on," freshman Jenn Mergl said.

The Health Education Center also offers tools to help students who wish to control their weight. Workshops in low-fat cooking and weight management, a health-speciality library and a computer-nutrition analysis program are available.

Sarah Skidmore covers the health center, counseling center, alumni association, AAA school and the business school for the Emerald. She can be reached via e-mail at [sskidm@gladstone.uoregon.edu](mailto:sskidm@gladstone.uoregon.edu).

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