

## Weight Watchers, Avoid the "Freshman 15"

Contributed by Denise Black - Black College Wire  
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Lifestyle changes in new environment lead to extra pounds.

The "Freshman 15" is defined as the number of pounds that many students gain in their freshman year of college. Although 15 pounds might be a stretch, it is common for freshman students to gain six to eight pounds.

Cornell University researchers have found that college freshmen gain an average of 4.2 pounds in just their first 12 weeks on a new campus.

Researcher David Levitsky states, "Significant weight gain during the first semester of college is a real phenomenon."

What is the cause of this weight gain? Dietitian Janet Colson, professor of human sciences at Middle Tennessee State University, has said it is triggered by the lifestyle changes that freshmen experience.

Latina Butler, an alumna of Jackson State University who works for the Jackson State Health Center, agreed.

"The lifestyle change of moving away from home, being accessible to junk food, and the pressure of fitting in and making new friends are all factors that contribute to the weight gain of freshman students," she said.

The causes of the Freshman 15 can range from increased snacking, alcohol intake, cafeteria food, stress, fast food and not getting enough sleep.

Thomas Bradfield, a sophomore and business major at Jackson State, said, "I gained the Freshman 15 because I didn't like the cafeteria food, therefore I ate off-campus" fast food.

There are five ways to avoid gaining those extra pounds.

First, be sure to eat breakfast to get your metabolism going. Second, drink lots of water; eight glasses a day is recommended. Third, get enough sleep. Research shows that losing sleep can lead to weight gain.

Fourth, you must exercise. Instead of driving to class, walk; instead of taking the elevator, use the stairway. Fifth, chose healthier foods in the cafeteria. Instead of fries, eat a salad.

Tamara Moore, a student assistant in the Walter Payton Wellness Center at Jackson State, said she believes the Freshman 15 can be avoided by utilizing the gym and eating more healthfully.

Freshman 15 is a common condition that can be avoided by adjusting to your new surroundings and taking it one day at a time.

Denise Black, a student at Jackson State University, writes for the Blue & White Flash.

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