

Yes, college is making you fat

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With college comes freedom. With freedom comes choices. With choices comes a cheeseburger instead of a salad.

That's how weight gain creeps into the lives of millions of college students who have dubbed the devious pounds as the Freshmen 15.

Tavis Piattoly, sports dietitian and nutrition consultant for the [Tulane University Athletics Department](#), says that weight gain is common, especially in former athletes who are no longer playing organized sports like they were in high school.

In addition to working with Tulane Athletics, Piattoly is the sports dietitian for the [National Football League Players Association's Brain and Body Program](#) at the Tulane [Institute of Sports Medicine](#). He served as the sports dietitian for the New Orleans Saints from 2006 to 2013.

Below are Piattoly's picks on the top ways you could be unknowingly packing on pounds and what you can do to curb it.

Reason No. 1 ? Reduced activity

He says: Try to be active for at least 45 minutes, four to five days per week, and use weight training to build or maintain muscle as well as keep your metabolism in check. Most importantly, do what you enjoy to remain active, whether that is playing a sport, doing yoga or running. Any activity is better than no activity.

Reason No. 2 ? Boredom

He says: Research indicates that we eat when we're bored, so try to keep busy. On the other hand, activities such as watching television, studying or playing video games could trigger your desire to eat mindlessly. Try bringing your own study snacks to avoid those coffee-shop pastries. Also beware of frozen coffee drinks. Some are packed with 400 calories and 30 grams of sugar per serving.

Reason No. 3 ? Nightlife

He says: Calories from alcohol can add up quickly if you're not paying close attention to what you're putting in your body. Indulging in too much alcohol increases your desire to choose high-calorie foods like those found at late-night eateries and fast food restaurants.

“Alcohol increases your desire to choose high-calorie foods like those found at late-night eateries and fast food restaurants.”—Tavis Piattoly, Tulane sports dietitian