

RA Nutrition Information Guide

What's the Need?

Healthy brains need to be fueled! Eating healthy foods throughout the day can improve students' mood, energy, and concentration-yet only 3.4% of NAU students eat the required 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day (ACHA-NCHA II, 2019).

How You Can Help with Nutrition:

- Remember that a person's food choices are influenced by several factors, including their socioeconomic background and their cultural upbringing. Instead of labeling foods as "good" vs. "bad", try to focus on the benefits that a variety of foods can contribute to a person's health.
- Emphasize foods to add versus limiting or restricting foods and food groups (e.g. focus on adding fruits and vegetables, whole grains, or water).
- Avoid messages or programs that emphasize body weight-instead, shift the focus to health and behaviors that improve health (eating fruits and vegetables, choosing water as a main drink, eating protein throughout the day).
- Dieting is a significant predictor of both weight gain in college freshmen and eating disorders; please avoid any programming that encourages a "diet mentality" among residence halls (e.g. challenges that eliminate entire food groups or different foods)

The Basics:

- Healthy eating is associated with increased energy, improved moods, improved immune system, and good digestive health.
- Since our stomachs empty every 3-5 hours, students should try to eat throughout the day-starting with breakfast and incorporating regular meals and snacks to maintain their energy levels.
- Most adults need 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day-eating in the Hot Spot and DuB is the easiest way to meet this goal on campus.
- The brain needs carbohydrates each day as fuel-students should try to choose high fiber carbohydrates throughout the day for longer lasting energy (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans).
- Caffeine can help with a quick jolt in the morning, but too much throughout the day can increase feelings of anxiety and interrupt sleep-encourage coffee runs earlier in the day and switching to decaf or herbal teas in the afternoon.

Putting it Into Practice:

- Scavenger Hunt: Send residents around Campus on a Nutrition Scavenger hunt-ask them to take photos of: a healthy side dish, a sugar free drink, a serving of fruits/vegetables, a whole grain, a lean protein food, a location that has vegan or vegetarian food, a place that sells healthy snacks
- Nutrition Trivia: Host a healthy trivia night in your hall using information found from reliable sources online.

- Purchase healthier snacks from catering for your events (whole pieces of fruit, hummus and vegetables, fruit infused water, chips and salsa, etc.).
- Organize a group trip with your residents to the dining hall for a meal and invite a Health Promotion Staff member to join you for a dining tour or “Lunch and Learn” about healthy eating on campus.
- Host a recipe swap and ask residents to share their favorite healthy recipes-bonus if they can be easily made in the residence hall!

Reliable Sources:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: www.eatright.org
- MyPlate: www.choosemyplate.gov (Hint-their “10 tips series” can be easily adapted for bulletin boards!)
- Health Promotion Website: www.nau.edu/healthpromotion
- The Nutrition Source from Harvard School of Public Health: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>
- Ted-Ed Talks: [How the Food You Eat Affects Your Brain](#) and [How Does Your Body Know You're Full](#)