If you are a college freshman, living on your own and making all of your own decisions about the food you eat may be a new experience for you. Fortunately here at Duke you have a wide variety of nutritious and delicious options available to you.

Here are some basic guidelines to help you get started.

**Become familiar with available dining options.**
Check out the dining website ([https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/dining](https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/dining)) where cafes on campus post menus and information about the foods they serve.

**Don’t skip meals.**
Your schedule may seem impossibly busy and you may be tempted to sleep in or skip lunch—**DON’T!** Not only does your body need fuel but so does your brain; studies show that students who skip breakfast don’t perform as well academically. Additionally skipping meals is likely to lead to over eating later in the day. So if you can’t make a meal, look for balanced “grab and go” options available at many cafes on campus or keep a supply of healthy snacks handy in your room and carry some along with you.

**Balanced Snack Ideas:**

- **Cereal and milk** – aim for a cereal with at least 3 grams of fiber and a few grams of protein per serving. Top with some nuts or seeds for a boost of protein and healthy fat.
- **Instant oatmeal** – Ideally plain and add your own fruit and nuts/seeds.
- **Peanut butter and whole grain crackers**
- **Granola bar** – aim for one that has some protein and fiber to keep you satisfied longer (a good rule of thumb is at least 5 grams of protein and 3 grams of fiber). Choose chocolate covered bars less often, and ideally not at breakfast.
- **Hummus and veggies or whole grain crackers**
- **String cheese and fruit**
- **Yogurt and granola**
- **Nuts and dried fruit or fresh fruit**
- **Trail mix** – ideally make your own, store bought versions can be high in salt and added sugars depending on what’s in them.

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Balance Your Plate at Meals.
Have a serving of good quality protein (eggs, tofu, meat, poultry, dairy, beans or fish), some fruit and/or veggies and a grain. Balancing your plate will keep your meals and snacks nutritious and your weight in the right range for you. For more information: [http://ow.ly/vDYf300wXu6](http://ow.ly/vDYf300wXu6)

Become Familiar with the Layout of your Café.
Know what is typically available at the various stations and mix and match to make a balanced meal you will enjoy eating. For example, say you want the grilled chicken from the grill but don’t want a bun - you can take your plate to the stir fry station and get some brown rice and veggies to create a balanced plate.

Vegetarian or Vegan?
The majority of campus cafes offers a very good variety of vegetarian and vegan options. At the Marketplace you will find an entire hot line which offers both a vegetarian and vegan option at all meals.

Special Dietary Needs.
Let a manager at your café know. Most special dietary needs can be managed by talking to the manager. You can contact Toni Apadula RDN, LDN, CEDRD at [919-613-1218](tel:919-613-1218) if you have concerns.

Late Night Eating.
Don’t deny yourself food if you are craving it, but don’t over do it either. Balanced eating is about being flexible and enjoying all the foods you love in moderation. It is okay to eat a piece or two of pizza at night or a small serving of dessert once in awhile, but for the most part try to opt for a balanced snack that includes some protein, like those previously listed.

You can always opt to speak with one of your Student Health Dietitians if you find you still have questions. Call [919-681-9355](tel:919-681-9355) to set up a free consultation. Additionally you can find Duke Student Health Nutrition Services on Facebook or online at [http://ow.ly/d8Kt300wZgU](http://ow.ly/d8Kt300wZgU) or on Twitter (@DukeWellness)

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