

## Fighting The “Freshman 15”

By **Tony the Tiger™**

USA — First the good news. The so-called “Freshman 15” that many students experience once they start college is, in reality, closer to the “Freshman 8.” The bad news is that’s still far more weight than most people want to “pack on” in their first year or two.

Studies have shown that students, on average, gain anywhere from two to ten pounds during their first two years of secondary education, with the majority of this weight gain occurring during the first semester of their freshman year.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the average weight gain is less than had long been believed to be the case, university nutritionists are still not enthusiastic about the recent findings. To help their students maintain a healthy weight, more universities have become increasingly proactive.

The University of Missouri at Columbia has been a leader in this effort with their program called WellBody. According to Frankie Minor, Director of Residential life at Missouri, WellBody is one part of a multi-pronged approach to help students make wise decisions about eating, alcohol use, drugs and stress management.

WellBody is a set of workshops (not for credit) that meets one hour each week for 8 weeks. The program aims to help students change their eating and physical activity attitudes and behavior. In addition to eating and physical activity, WellBody addresses body image which is intrinsically connected to one’s attitudes and behaviors about food and health.

WellBody classes focus on eating behaviors and nutrition without traditional dieting or restriction. Through a non-diet approach WellBody emphasizes listening to the body’s internal cues and addressing eating in response to emotions and stress.

Juliane Kier, Director of Campus Dining Services at the University of Missouri at Columbia said, *“We don’t focus on dieting, we take a holistic approach. We call it ‘mindful eating.’ We focus on what’s going on in a student’s life, and whether they’re using food as a way to deal with stress.”*

Ms. Kier continued, *“We teach students to step back from the habit of ‘eating on autopilot’ by focusing on nutrition-dense foods that satisfy the appetite without containing a lot of empty calories. We also do individual counseling. It’s definitely a non-diet behavioral based approach.”*

Students’ metabolisms are already starting to slow down by the time they enter college. So they need to start tackling behaviors now that could lead to serious health problems down the road. They’re under stress. They have lots to do. And most of them are living away from home for the first time in their lives. Students can also be trained to make presentations at residence halls, fraternities, and sororities about eating healthy, getting enough exercise, managing stress and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

**For more information on the “Freshman 15,” visit [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org). For information on wellness products from Kellogg’s® *Food Away From Home*, talk to your Kellogg’s sales rep, call 1-877-511-5777 or go to [www.kelloggsfoodawayfromhome.com/nutrition](http://www.kelloggsfoodawayfromhome.com/nutrition). ■**

