

Atlanta Center for Eating Disorders

There is No Freshman 15...It's the "Freshman 2!"

A huge fear of college freshmen, especially women, is the "Freshman 15," the mythical average weight gain during the freshman year.

This is the cause of a great deal of self-induced misery, fear of food, body preoccupation and hours of over-exercise. At it's worst, severe food restriction results in bingeing, diet-binge cycles, purging, or life-threatening anorexia.

What is tragic is that there is no Freshman 15. It is an urban legend, a college bogeyman repeated year after year for decades. Little scientific evidence exists to substantiate or rebut this commonly held belief. The few studies who have examined weight gain among freshman college students are equivocal.

However, a recent study of 137 freshman women at the University of Oklahoma did show an average weight gain of 2.4 pounds. Hardly the 15 pounds of legend that, research suggests, drives many freshmen to panic around food, obsess about weight and categorize themselves as overweight and ugly.

Here are some ways to have a healthy, successful year and to avoid the Freshman 2:

1. Take a food plan to college, not a diet. With so many changes in your life, it is not the time to try to lose weight. Have a plan that enables a healthy, enjoyable relationship with food.
2. Eat intuitively. Eat when you are hungry, stop when you are mildly full. Period. This is difficult at college where there is a lot of recreational eating and a lot of eating to medicate stress. It is worth the effort.
3. Eat mindfully. Enjoy every bite. Use your senses. Avoid unconscious eating.
4. Move your body. Enjoyably. Keep up a similar activity level to high school.
5. Stop comparing your body. Do not create a daily mandatory beauty contest in your head. Your college awards diplomas, not tiaras. There is nothing constructive about comparing your buttocks to every other pair in the room.
6. If you have an active eating disorder, stay home. Take a deferment for a semester to enter recovery. Any addiction in college is a set-up to crash and burn. Most colleges would prefer you take time off and return when you are not a liability. If your eating disorder escalates - and it likely will - you may be asked to leave school. If you are already struggling with food and body image issues, ask for a deferment, stay home, get treatment and start college when you are at full strength mentally, emotionally and physically.
7. If you are already at school with eating or body image issues, put up a safety net fast. Meet regularly with a registered dietitian who has eating disorder experience. The dietitian can be your food coach. Your college has a free counseling center. Do not isolate and try to go it alone. Addictions love that.
8. Enjoy your only freshman year. You needn't worry about the "Freshman 2" if you remember to listen to your body, feed it intuitively and move it enjoyably.

Rick Kilmer, Ph.D.

New Children's Group at ACE!!

The Atlanta Center for Eating Disorders is now offering a group for children who are struggling with eating issues and/or body image issues. This group will help kids explore their feelings with experiential exercises and some education related to a positive self-image and effective expression of thoughts and feelings. Additionally, a free parent support group is offered through ACE, as well as family therapy. The children's group will be held on Saturdays between 11:30am and 12:30pm.

For more information, please call (770) 458-8711 x0 or visit our website at <http://www.eatingdisorders.cc>

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Looking For....

We are looking for more referrals for Physicians and Psychiatrists who understand Eating Disorders.

If you think that your personal Physician or Psychiatrist is someone you would refer another eating disorder patient to, we would like to know.

If you could provide us with the name, phone number and location of your Physician or Psychiatrist, we would really appreciate it.

Please contact the Front Desk either in person, at gethelp@eatingdisorders.cc or (770) 458-8711 x0.

Thank you for your help.



ACE HOUSE: A Therapeutic Bed and Breakfast

ACE House is located across the street from ACE's central facility in Dunwoody, Georgia. Guests are expected to attend the ACE Intensive Outpatient Program and may extend their stays as they taper down from intensive treatment and seek full-time, part-time or volunteer work. Licensed to operate as a Personal Care Home, ACE House offers a comfortable, secure and convenient residential option to any program participants who:

- have no intensive treatment options in their local area.
- cannot live at home while in intensive treatment.
- are completing other residential programs and need to step down in the Atlanta area.
- do not require inpatient treatment but would benefit from intensive treatment.

Breakfast is served each morning at ACE House, and detailed menus are posted weekly. Meal planning, cooking lessons, community meetings and other services complement recovery skills taught in the ACE program.

Contact ACE for room rates, availability and other details.

A Few Things to Remember When Going to College, High School, etc.

Trust Yourself.

All the time, effort, and energy you have put in at ACE should not go to waste. Whether you have changed drastically or only slightly, you have been given the knowledge and tools that you need to cope and thrive constructively. You are strong and independent, and 100% capable of applying the skills you have learned to the highs and lows of life.

Take Each Day At A Time!

It may seem overwhelming leaving a place like ACE where you have become so comfortable. The best thing you can do is to take each thing in your life one day at a time. Do not get stressed out about things that are out of your control and/or future. Be concerned about what is going on in the present, and what you can do to stay healthy and calm!

By G.Z., August 2007

A free Family Support Group is held every Monday night from 6:45 to 8:15pm. Sign up through your family therapist or contact the front desk at (770) 458-8711 x0.



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