**CURRENT STUDENT DIET**

Numerous studies have shown that college students often have poor eating habits. Students tend to eat fewer nutritional value meals on daily basis and report high intake of high-fat, high-calorie foods.

Research shows students learn and perform better when they’re well nourished. Healthy eating has been linked to higher grades, better memory, more alertness, faster information processing and improved health leading to better college attendance according to registered dietitian Elisa Zied, author of “Feed Your Family Right.” Conversely, unhealthy eating habits can negatively affect learning.

During the transition from secondary school to university, students need to adapt to a new environment. When students fail to adapt adequately this can have negative consequences, such as students who eat lots of junk food are more likely to fall behind in college.

Proper eating and nutrition is not integrated enough into college in Ireland. Young adults are not being taught how to be self-sustaining. Nutrition classes learnt in Primary and Secondary School have all but disappeared from colleges. There is a fundamental lack of understanding on how to eat well in a very broad sense. Students having certain ingredients in their fridge but not knowing what recipe to make with these ingredients, so ordering takeaway appears to be the easiest option. A corresponding issue is the student is spending a needless amount money for only one meal, while also proposing a poor and toxic diet for themselves in return. Diets that are high in sugar and fat can suppress the activity of a brain peptide called BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) that helps with learning and memory formation. Studies show that when people prepare food at home they tend to eat better, consume fewer calories, and have higher nutritional value.

College is a critical period regarding unhealthy changes in eating behaviours in students. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore which factors influence Irish university students’ eating behaviour and to then develop a tailored web application to help better these eating habits. We aim to collect ideas and recommendations in order to facilitate the diet of students. Development of an effective and tailored web application aiming to improve a healthier option of eating behaviours in university students.

We will use this research to help our web application develop possible steps that college students can take to cater nutritional values, within preference. Relationships between nutrition and brain function have been the focus of much external research.

**References:**

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