



Media Release

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For immediate release

Cut out takeaways to beat the bulge and the overdraft

With nearly 400,000 new students starting at university later this month, many moving away from home for the first time, dietitians at the British Dietetic Association are advising freshers to cut down on the chocolate, chips and fast foods if they want a bulge in the wallet and not on the stomach.

Surveys show that today's students often rely heavily on processed, convenience ready meals and takeaways such as kebabs, burgers and chips. These can be fine now and then, but with impending student loans, course fees and living expenses squeezing the food budget, living off them will really push up costs. Usually it is much better value to cook some simple recipes, such as pastas or casseroles, especially where meat or fish can be made to go further by combining them with less expensive pulses and vegetables.

So as the academic year starts, the BDA has put together a few simple ideas to help students eat well without breaking the bank.

- Try to plan your meals in advance, making a list of what you need to buy and sticking to it.
- Base meals on starchy foods such as breakfast cereals, oats, pasta, noodles, rice and couscous – especially whole grain forms. The latter release energy slowly, to keep the brain working at its best and provide B vitamins and zinc for healthy skin. They will last a long time if stored carefully so buy in bulk. Own brand products are usually just as nutritious as premium brands.
- Beans, lentils and pulses are cheap and nutritious and are an ideal replacement for some or all of the meat in casseroles, soups and salads. When fridge space is limited lentils and pulses, which are available in tins, are ideal for the store cupboard.
- Oily fish are rich in omega-3 fats and can be used fresh or canned. Fish, such as sardines, pilchards or mackerel are ideal in sandwiches, on toast or pasta, in baked potatoes or salads. Try flaking smoked mackerel fillets (really cheap) and add to cooked pasta or boiled potatoes – add some plain yogurt and mix well and serve with a vegetable like frozen peas or broccoli which can cook at the same time.

- Blended vegetable or rapeseed oil is a good value alternative to olive oil for cooking or dressing salads.
- Buying fresh fruit and vegetables in season from local markets or greengrocers can be cheaper and can go a lot further than ready made meals. The supermarket is not always the cheapest place to shop but often reduced goods at the end of the day can be a bargain. Don't forget frozen, canned and dried fruit and vegetables count towards the recommended 5-a-day. Frozen vegetables can be less expensive and just as nutritious, and can often be cooked in less than five minutes. Dried fruit, nuts, seeds or a banana are great as snacks.
- Many tasty dishes such as soups, curries, pasta meals, bean chilli, fish or cottage pie and stir-fries are easy to make. They can give you a repertoire of healthy food choices that are more nutritious and cheaper than canteen pie and chips. You can often cook in bulk and freeze portions, defrosting and reheating individual portions when you need them.
- Look for a cheap and cheerful student cookbook or recipes on the internet. Sharing cooking and shopping with friends or flat-mates can also be economical and makes cooking more fun, relaxing and less of a chore.

Sue Baic, registered dietitian and spokesperson for the British Dietetic Association, says: "Eating healthily doesn't have to be expensive there are lots of good value foods packed with nutrients and lots of ways to save money with savvy shopping skills. While there's nothing wrong with occasional fast food or treats, having them too often can really hit the wallet. Surveys have shown that in their first year students often gain unwanted weight and lack many of the essential vitamins and minerals in their diets making them more likely to succumb to colds and flu.

"A good diet is important in all sorts of other ways. It can help students get the most from their studying, boost the immune system, support them in sporting activities and help keep them looking and feeling their best."

For the clear experts in nutrition call the hotline on 0870 850 2517 or go to www.bda.uk.com and visit the press centre for the latest food fact sheets on a variety of topics. Food fact sheets on healthy eating for all ages and stages are available at <http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts>. Remember, you can trust a dietitian to know about nutrition.

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Notes to Editors

1. Media enquiries to The British Dietetic Association should be directed to our media hotline on 0870 580 2517 email pr@bda.uk.com.
2. The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with over 6,000 members. About two-thirds of members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining members work in education, industry, research, sport settings or freelance.
3. Registered dietitians hold the only legally-recognisable graduate qualifications in nutrition and dietetics. They are experts in interpreting and translating the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems. Their advice is sound and based on current scientific evidence.
4. Registration, awarded by the Health Professions Council, is an indication that a Dietitian is fit to practise and is working within an agreed statement of conduct. For further details about The British Dietetic Association, please visit our websites: www.bda.uk.com www.bdaweightwise.com www.teenweightwise.com.