

How to Avoid the Freshman Fifteen by Eating Better at Commons

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Abstract

My research evaluates the most common foods eaten at Commons. My hypothesis is that here is a correlation between the Commons diet and weight gain at Beloit College. My data comes from Director of Commons Bill Behling, the government's daily allowances, and University of Pittsburgh's website [http://www.nutritiondata.com/index.html]. The nutritional value of the average daily meals consumed at Commons are compared to the daily allowance for an adult. Food consumed is very high in fat and sugar, but fruit and vegetable consumption is extremely low. My conclusion presents better choices to those Beloit students now make contributing no necessary nutrients but many Calories to weight gain.

Introduction

The common phrase students hear before their freshman year of college is "beware of the freshman fifteen." They are told that as a freshman they should expect to gain at least fifteen pounds. A study done at Rutgers' Cook College found that on average weight gain for a freshman was seven pounds due to eating approximately 112 excess Calories per day (1). Where do those extra Calories come from? Added sugar is responsible for 20% of total food energy in the average diet. Over one third of male teenagers drink more than three soft drinks per day which is equal to 24 tablespoons of sugar a day. Research has shown that drinking sugar-sweetened beverages increases overall intake of total daily calories (2). Sixty-five percent of adults are overweight or obese and more than 16% of children aged 6 – 19 years old are considered overweight (3). On average overweight adolescents consume more potato chips, sugar-sweetened drinks and a combination of sugar-sweetened drinks and regular pop and ate more foods away from home (4). The weight gain can attribute to type II diabetes, hypertension, and hypercholesterolemia. Obesity among college students could also lower self-esteem and affect academic performance.

Method

Using peer reviewed literature, an accredited online website, and data from Commons Director Bill Behling I was able to find what students eat at Commons, and the nutrition benefits and hazards of those foods.

Table 1: Better choices for Commons meal: Breakfast

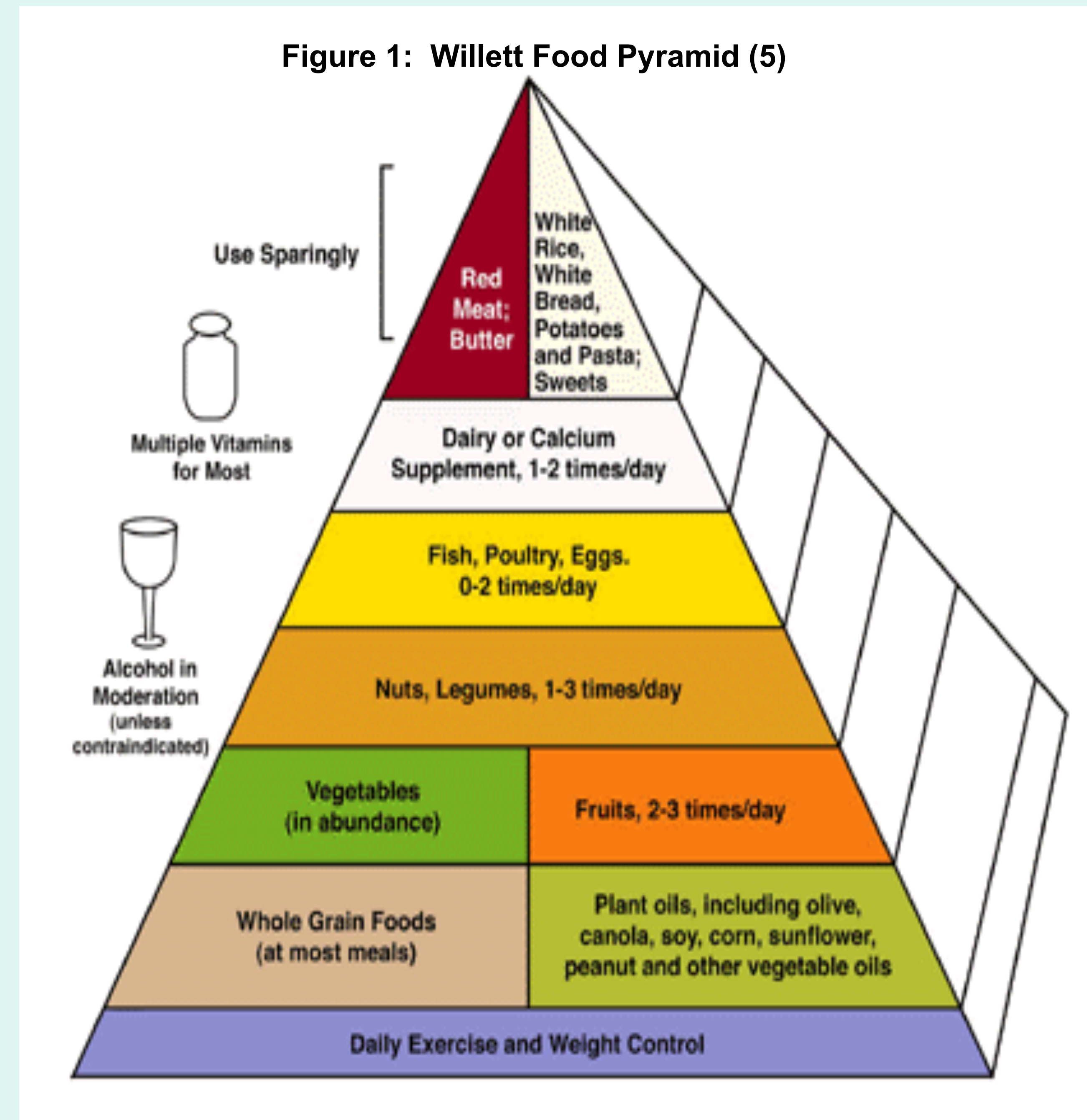
Breakfast	Omelettes		Egg White omelettes, with vegetables and Turkey	Lean protein, vitamins, minerals
	Bagels 20.9	Carbohydrates	Lessen how often they are consumed	Energy
	Cereal 51.5% High sugar cereals	High Sugar	Total, Special K, Low-sugar choices	Folic Acid, Vitamins, and minerals
	Butter/Margarine 2.1 lb/year	Saturated Fats	Olive Oil	Monounsaturated Fats
	Bacon 1.4 lb	254 Calories (per package)/ Saturated fats	Egg whites	Still get protein but not all the calories or cholesterol.

Table 2: Better choices for Commons meal: Lunch

Lunch	French Fries	This food contains Trans Fat	Vegetables	Vitamins and Minerals
	Sandwiches (white bread)	Does not have the advantages of whole wheat	Whole Wheat Bread	This food is low in Saturated Fat, and very low in Cholesterol. It is also a good source of Dietary Fiber, and a very good source of Manganese and Selenium.
			Salad with dark vegetables and olive oil as the dressing	The darker the leaf or vegetable the more nutrient rich it is. Olive oil has polyphenols.
			Fruits and Vegetables	Vitamins and Minerals
	Pop 1.43 g/year	High in sugar	Water	Keeps your body hydrated, healthier skin, less fatigue.

Table 3: Better choices for Commons meal: Dinner

Dinner	Roast Beef 2.2lb/year	Cholesterol	Tuna Fish	Omega-3 Fatty acids
	Baked Potatoes 5.9 lb/year	In excess high in starch and carbohydrates	Dark green vegetables, Salad, Fruit	Vitamins and Minerals
	Pasta 3.86 lb/year	In excess high in starch and carbohydrates	Use sparingly, Whole Wheat pasta(If available) A sandwich on Whole Wheat bread	Unrefined grains.
	Rice(white rice) 2.56 lb/year	Does not fill you up as well so you keep eating it and gain weight. 91% carbohydrates	Whole grain cereals	
	Cookies 45.5/year	High in sugar and fat	Fruits and vegetables	Vitamins and minerals, antioxidants.



Results

Tables 1-3 show foods most commonly eaten at Commons for each meal and better choices that are available for student to eat. The better choices are in accordance with the Willett Food Pyramid shown in Figure 1.

Discussion

Overall the amount of food consumed by one student is not as bad as previously predicted. There were surprises such as the number of apples consumed each year. However, the amount of non whole-grain food being consumed is harmful for health and weight.

Simple things can be done to provide a healthier well-balanced diet. The new Willet food pyramid is the revised version of the Department of Agriculture's former food pyramid and led to the new food pyramid (Fig 1). It emphasizes to avoid weight loss, daily exercise is essential. Whole grain foods and plant oils are highly recommended. Vegetables should be eaten at snack times and at most meals. Fruits have are recommended at least two to three times a day. Nuts and legumes (which are provided adequately in Commons) should be eaten 1—3 times daily. Fish, poultry, and eggs should be eaten 0-2 times a day and dairy should be eaten 1-2 times a day. Red meat and butter are high in fat and omega-6 fatty acids and should be used sparingly along with white rice, white bread, white pasta, potatoes, soda, and sweets.

References

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