



Pam Tucker, a university cook, works the ovens at Selleck.

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College food gets healthier

By Rebecca Oltmans
Staff Reporter

University students can't rely on school lunches to make sure they get a balanced meal.

"There are no guidelines from the government at college-level meals," said Douglas Rix, assistant director of food service for the Office of University Housing at UNL.

"The only restrictions we have are the ones we impose on ourselves," Rix said.

But new nutrition labels may make it easier for students to be more health conscious, said Sheri Wieden, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduate and home economics teacher.

The new labels came out last year and will be required to be on all packaged food by 1995. The labels are easier to read, and give amounts in percentages of recommended daily allowances for calories from fat, Wieden said.

"That can be a plus for students worried about gaining weight, especially the 'freshman fifteen'," Wieden said.

What freshmen eat isn't the only factor in gaining weight when they come to college. Students are sometimes less active in sports and exercise than they were in high school, Wieden said, and physical development slows down as well.

"Typically, physical development slows down after age 18," Wieden said, "and your body doesn't burn as many calories growing."

The food served in residence halls won't have the new nutrition labels, but students can get information about what they're eating.

"Right now we have a number of ways to let students know what they are eating," Rix said, "like nutritional tags on tray items that identify fat and calorie content."

A dietician and nutritional education committee will also provide educational programs for students.

Residence hall meals started getting healthier a long time ago, Rix said.

"Years ago we went to 2 percent milk," Rix said, "and we made our hamburgers 80 percent lean meat to 20 percent fat rather than the traditional 70 percent/30 percent."

Eighty percent of the cooking is now scratch cooking rather than coming out of a box, Rix said.

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