We’re basically looking at the different times in a woman’s life when she’s especially high-risk for weight gain, and what she can do to avoid it.

**The Freshman 15 – why does college add weight and what advice would you give to prevent it?**

Across the country, many universities have made it a priority to offer healthier foods and a wider range of options. Despite the availability of healthier options, student still are gaining weight, at a rate that mirrors that rest of the country.

There are numerous factors that prompt weight gain during college. For many students, college is the first time that they are completely in charge of their meals. This transition can be difficult and confusing to students who didn’t give their meals much thought.

**Advice:** Arm yourself with information. Sign up for a nutrition class your first semester. Many cafeterias provide nutritional information on line. Before you head to the cafeteria, be sure to check out what is on the menu. Many students can feel overwhelmed by the choices and gravitate back to old comfort foods.

College cafeterias make it very challenging to eat mindfully because they are buffets and work on the “all you can eat” principle.

**Advice:** There is a new movement on college campuses to ban food trays. Eliminating trays at cafeteria buffets saves an enormous amount of money and reduces energy usage because they don’t have to be washed. Even if there are trays, skip it. This simple step can help you to eat more mindfully. You will be much more likely to choose the foods you really want to eat rather than piling a number of things on your tray.

Be mindful of your social eating. Instead of meeting for a dinner date, head to a play or a movie. If you are order pizza, often the college student food of choice, order it with veggies. Know that is just as important to feed your mind as it is your body.

After a late night of cramming, it is not uncommon for students to skip breakfast. Skipping meals is one of the number one reason that people overeat at the next meal. Students also use

**Advice:** Getting adequate sleep is one of the most important things students can do to help prevent weight gain. Not only will it regulate the hormones that help to regulate their hunger, they will be less tempted to turn to food to

It’s helpful for students to

College students often skip meals.

“Dieting” may not be the answer for college students. Studies show that students who diet don’t do as well on tests. Also, dieting makes you more vulnerable to binge eating while under stress, such as during exams.

A college student’s social circle can make or break their eating habits. Studies show that students to mirror the eating habits of their friends. So, if your friend is eating a salad, it is more likely you will too. If your friends have ice cream after dinner, it’s likely that you will join along, even if you aren’t hungry. College students should take a close

Drinking alcohol and using other substances can also significantly increase mindless eating. So, if you want to

Snacking: Snacking is common among college students. These snacks can quickly add up. Students often become more sedentary

If you want a snack, that is fine, just remember to do it mindfully. When you eat, just eat. Put the books aside

Caveat: Studies show a modest weight gain during Some students lose weight and others gain. On average, it is about five pounds. But, if you begin college already overweight, its can significant add up after four years.

(My book Mindful Eating 101: A Guide to Healthy Eating in College and Beyond is all about this topic!)

**Marriage/cohabitation – studies show women gain weight. How to keep from sharing your mate’s diet habits?**

Weight gain often begins when couples start dating. Newly dating couples spend a lot of time in restaurants where they are eating high calorie foods and big portion sizes.

**Advice:** Try cooking together. Not only is it great bonding time, it saves money and you will eat much healthier food. Make it a contest that fosters healthy competition. Challenger your partner to a cook-off. The person who finds the best recipe wins.

Studies show that couple’s eating behavior begins to gravitate toward each other. Women often make the make adjustment to their eating habits. For example, they may start buying a higher fat milk because

Remember that it is okay to buy separate foods.

It may take some compromise.

Join with your partner to set health goals. Agree to go to the gym as a couple twice a week.

Realize that the health of your partner can significant impact your financial future. Weight related illnesses such as cancer, diabeties, heart attacks can raise your health insurance and be devastating to a family emotionally and financially.

**Pregnancy – how to keep the baby weight from sticking around.**

The best advice for women is to avoid gaining too much weight during pregnancy. Unfortunately, many women still adhere to the saying, “eating for two.” Yet, women only need approximately an additional 300 calories. This only equals two small snacks. How much weight you should gain varies by If you are pregnant, check out the new weight guidelines.

Several things sabotogue pregnant women’s healthy diets. An example is using food to try to deal with morning sickness. While sometimes nibbling may curb some of the nausea, it’s often more helpful to try non-food related remedies such as ginger tea or sucking on peppermint candy.

Instead of just eating more, make sure that you focus on nutritious snacks.

Gaining too much weight during your pregnancy can be risky to your own health and your babies. Gaining the right or healthy amount of weight and make your delivery much easier

Also, weighting too much weight during pregnancy is a risk factor for post-partum depression.

**After age 30 – your metabolism slows down. What can you do?**

After age 30, it is even more important for women to manage their weight. It’s a strong investment in your health.

My clients often talk about having a new focus on their weight and health after having children. They realize that extra weight prevents them from running around and playing with their children. Also, their focus sometimes move from

Wanting to be a good role model for their children.

Unfortunately, women often put themselves at the end of the priority list. Sometimes they have difficulty managing the demands of caring for their family and

Media ads often urge women to use food to soothe themselves with food. For example, imagine

Advice: Invest in finding

**Advice:** Although it is often easier said than done, make sure you make taking care of yourself a priority.

Adjust your diet to match the changes in your metabolism. This may mean

Exercise is not