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# Higher Education may come with Higher Calories: Summary of Findings from the Junk Food Ethnography Project

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## **Research Summary:**

We talked to many students from USF to determine why they eat junk food. We found students on campus and around the USF area. According to a Tufts University's Health Study, 66% of students don't consume the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. The study also showed that 60% eat too much artery-clogging saturated fat.

## **Methodology:**

We conducted our study on the consumption of junk food by college students at USF. We found 10 students around CIS, Burger King, the Marshall Center and areas surrounding USF eating various types of junk food. We interviewed and photographed them and asked them why they eat junk food as opposed to healthier foods and snacks. Our ethnography study was conducted in January 2009.

## **Results:**

Out of all the people we interviewed more than half said the reason they eat junk food is because they don't have time to eat a healthy meal. Most of the people admitted to eating some type of junk food at least once a week. Some students admitted to eating junk food everyday. Although our study concentrated on junk food we noticed that a few people were eating healthy foods such as salads, soups, and some sushi. This leads us to conclude that the time excuse isn't a valid one. We also found

two subjects eating the equivalent of three full size meals. We noticed that for the most part students say they want to eat healthy but yet make up excuses for why they do not. The worst thing is that the Tufts Study also uncovered that our eating habits that we use in our college years are the ones we're likely to adopt for our adult lives.

## **Conclusion:**

After conducting the experiment we concluded that most students eat more junk food than necessary. Even though there might be sufficient time to grab a healthy snack they opt to eat something they themselves admit is not healthy. What we found horrifying is that statistics say that this unhealthy habit will follow them to adult life and onto their children.

*"I probably eat sweets everyday!" - Jessica S.*

*"If it's put in front of me I can't stop. I gained 10 pounds over winter break because of junk food!" - Tara S*