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BUDGET FRIENDLY FOODS HELP UNIVERSITY RESULTS

As university students return for another year of study, Australia's peak body for dietitians is urging them to consider their risk of food insecurity, a nutritional issue that can affect energy levels and academic results.

While food insecurity among Australians is sitting at around two per cent¹, research in tertiary students suggests² up to 48 per cent experience some level of food insecurity – or difficulty in accessing nutritious and safe foods.

According to the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA), this makes university students vulnerable, and could have a lasting impact on cognitive development and academic results.

Some students are more vulnerable than others, with financial pressures having a big impact.

Costs associated with moving and living out of home, and low income due to commitment to study contribute to food insecurity.

International students have the added challenge of adapting to foods available in Australia.

Tim McMaster, an Accredited Practising Dietitian and spokesperson for DAA, said: 'These financial pressures mean students are missing out on essential food groups such as fruit and vegetables.

'There is a misconception, particularly in the younger generation, that healthy, fresh food costs too much. But eating nutritious food doesn't need to be expensive. There are plenty of affordable options for those on a tight budget.'

Mr McMaster suggests the following budget-friendly, nutritious choices from each of the core food groups:

- Have an apple (45c / 100g) rather than a chocolate bar (\$2.20 / 50g)³
- Try boiled or baked potatoes (55c / 150g) rather than potato chips (\$4.50 / 150g)³
- Enjoy porridge for breakfast (15c / 30g of rolled oats) instead of corn flakes (30c / 30g)³
- Purchase lean raw chicken (40c / 100g) rather than marinated or pre-made kebabs (\$2.00 / 100g)³
- Drink light or skim milk, (\$1-2.00 / L) rather than flavoured milk (more than \$5.00 / L)⁴.

'With a bit of planning and some knowledge of healthy and cheap choices, students can fuel themselves with nutritious food to maximise their learning and achieve optimum results,' said Mr McMaster.

ENDS

For further information, an image or to organise an interview with Tim McMaster contact Felicity Curtain, Dietitians Association of Australia, on 0409 661 920.

MEDIA RELEASE

References

1. http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/food/publications/national_food_plan/whitepaper/5-1-maintaining-food-security-in-australia
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