



# EATING 101 RU DINING HEALTHY?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM  
A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health



## Clearing the Smoke: Tobacco's Influence on Nutritional Health

It is no surprise that smoking cigarettes causes lung cancer and heart disease. However, did you know that smoking may also affect how our bodies absorb nutrients, suppress our appetite, and contribute to poor food choices? On January 1, 2023, the policy, *RU Tobacco Free* was established at Rutgers, prohibiting smoking and use of all tobacco products. This includes e-cigarettes, hookahs, novel tobacco products, and smokeless tobacco products on all Rutgers campuses and off-campus sites. Despite the potential consequences, some college students continue to use tobacco products. Read below to understand how smoking and nutritional health are interconnected!



### Nutrient Depletion

Smoking can lead to the depletion of essential nutrients such as vitamins C, D, B, calcium, and other minerals. These nutrients are crucial for a healthy immune system, strong bones, and overall well-being. Nicotine, the addictive substance of tobacco products, and the toxins in cigarette smoke interfere with the body's ability to absorb and utilize these nutrients.



### Appetite Suppression

Nicotine also acts as an appetite suppressant, which can cause irregular eating patterns. Nicotine can reduce your desire for food and decrease your sense of taste and smell, which can lessen the sensory aspect of a tasty meal. In fact, the toxic substances in tobacco smoke can also permanently injure your body's ability to taste and smell. A low appetite, paired with changes in smell and taste may lead to inadequate food and nutrient intake.



### Poor Food Choices

Smokers are more likely to make unhealthy food choices, opting for processed and high-fat foods over nutrient-dense options. Inadequate nutrient intake and a reliance on unhealthy, calorie-dense foods can contribute to low energy. This behavior not only affects your nutritional health, but it is also detrimental towards academic and physical performance.

Seek Support: Talk to a clinician at one of the health centers or call 1-800-QUITNOW.  
You do not have to go through the journey alone.  
Visit <https://www.rutgers.edu/news/rutgers-be-tobacco-free-2023> to learn more.

*Fuel your body, not your addiction.*

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