



Nutrition Nibbles

New Year's Resolutions Worth Keeping

Every year quite a few Americans set out, or resolve, to improve their life in some way. While approximately 40% of us commit to making at least one change on January 1st, only a small percentage end up following through on their resolutions by the end of 6 months.

Popular New Year's resolutions take health into account, attempt to pay down debt, and aim at broadening one's horizons. Some commitments are specific (I will use the patch consistently to quit smoking by the end of the month); others are quite vague (I promise to volunteer more often). While all these goals are great, which ones are the most worthwhile to keep?

When it comes to physical health, I have identified a handful of resolutions that are worth working on because their potential benefits are so great. Note: when it comes to setting goals, you will be most successful if you are SMART or set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely resolutions. Really think through what you would like to achieve and you are more likely to experience success!

1. Commit to making one more meal at home each week. Obviously this strategy will help you save money but the benefits extend far beyond fiscal. Meals at home improve family communication, children's grades, and allow parents to model good table manners. From a nutrition standpoint, home meals tend to contain less fried and salty foods, fewer sugar-rich beverages, while improving produce, dairy, and lean protein intake at a fraction of the calories you would get at a restaurant. Another bonus? Dining at home allows kids to get cookin' in the kitchen and helps expand their taste palates beyond chicken fingers and French fries.

2. Resolve to start out your dining experience with a salad. Salads are high in water, fiber, and volume all which help you to feel full and best nourish your body on fewer calories. Choosing a salad made of non-starchy vegetables and light on the toppings (cheese, nuts, dressing) can help you save 50 to 100 calories at every meal, leading to gradual weight loss without those feeling of deprivation.

College Corner:

Simply Trendy

According to Mintel, the newest marketing strategy for 2010 is: less is more, at least when it comes to food and beverage ingredients. Gone are the days of laundry list food labels (I'm not complaining) and hopefully to stay is the trend of keeping unnecessary food preservatives, colorings, and mystery ingredients out of our grocery baskets.

In 2010, be on the lookout for foods labeled as "Simple" or "Simply." Other brands are taking the trend a step further and renaming their foods by the number of ingredients they contain, such as Haagen-Dazs' newest ice cream, Five, which contains only five ingredients.

While getting back to basics and focusing on less processed foods can be a step in the right direction for health, this trend does not guarantee that all "simple" foods are good for you. Daily staples like bread, yogurt, and cereal can use the makeover, but paring down on ice cream ingredients does not automatically make it a health food. Use your common sense when grocery shopping!

Questions or Comments? Email me at marymahoneyrd@comcast.net

New Year's Resolutions continued...

New Year's Resources

3. Decide to start-up a walking program with a pedometer.

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends a daily minimum of 30 minutes of brisk walking (or accumulating 10,000 steps using a pedometer) to bring about numerous health benefits. Are you ready? Walking can prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. It lowers blood pressure and strengthens both muscles and bones, decreasing your risk for osteoporosis and arthritis. Walking helps with weight management and obesity prevention. It also increases your energy and mental alertness, enhances your life satisfaction, and gives you a more positive life outlook. Walking on a daily basis allows you to sleep longer and more soundly at night. It is a great stress reducer--walking takes your mind off things and enhances relaxation. Walking is the panacea for all of life's ills and a pedometer keeps it interesting and keeps you on track.

4. Pledge to decrease your television time by 30-60 minutes each day. They don't call it a brain-drain for nothing. The average person watches 3-4

hours of TV daily. Turning off the boob tube a little more often allows you to connect more with others and provides you with more time to exercise, prepare a healthy meal, grocery shop, read a book, or pamper yourself. Less television means less exposure to violence and junk food ads. If you are not in front of the TV, you are less likely to mindlessly snack which helps keep that waistline trim.

5. Commit to quit smoking ASAP! Not only is it good for your physical health (less cancer, phlegm, coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath), you will feel more in charge of your life and less reliant on outside objects, aka cigarettes, to bring you happiness and relaxation. Your clothes, hair, and breath will smell better. Food will taste and smell better to you than ever before. You will have more energy and stamina to keep up with your life and family. You and that secondhand smoke you create are less likely to annoy others.

There you have it; 5 resolutions worth working on and making a new part of your 2010.

Here are some links that can help make your resolution keeping a bit easier:

Tips on Getting Started with Resolutions--
<http://www.umm.edu/features/prepare.htm>

New Year's Resolution Survival Guide--
http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/motivation_articles.asp?id=987

Healthy Recipe Ideas--
www.cookinglight.com
www.eatingwell.com
www.foodnetwork.com/healthy-eating/index.html

Pedometer Walking Program Worksheet--
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/DPH/dph40075.pdf>

Smoking Cessation Info--
www.smokefree.gov

Reducing TV and Screen Time with "Live Outside the Box" Toolkit--
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthServices/health/chronic/overweight/reductv.aspx>

Favorite Food

Lots of people are curious about what dietitians eat when they are "off-duty." Well, this winter I have been enjoying soup. Minestrone, chicken tortilla, lentil, sausage bean soup--you name it, I have whipped up a batch in the crock pot. Not only are soups a

wonderful and warm way to stay hydrated this season, they are an easy and tasty way to eat more vegetables. Volumetrics research shows that when you serve soup as a first course, you will save yourself an average of 150 calories at that meal. Soup's on!

"Cheers to a New Year and another chance for us to get it right."

~Oprah Winfrey