

Resolution to Diet? Consider this!

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It's that time of year! After the months of Halloween candy, heavy holiday dinners and special sweet treats, many of us resolve to change our diet in the new year... every year. If you've made a diet resolution this year or ever, I've got some food for thought to share with you on diet change.

For many, diet change is not actually the goal of a resolution to eat better. Sometimes, the goal is legitimately better health, but often the resolution of "eat better" is a euphemism for "lose weight." I encourage everyone thinking about a resolution around their food to look deeply at their reasons for wanting to make this change. If you would like to lose weight, what is driving that goal? If health is the answer or you have a health issue which you think will respond to a diet change, what is the outcome you are seeking? Put another way, when you imagine your health issue or weight optimized, how would your life look different?

These questions aren't just fluff. They are vitally important. I encourage you to take the vision of what your life would be like "if/when" you succeed at your resolution and start enjoying some of that now. If you want to lose weight so that your joints feel better so that you can play more actively with your grandchildren, start playing more actively with them now! And use that vision to motivate you to stay on track with your resolutions.

Now let's talk about the actual resolution or goal setting. I've heard resolutions spanning the gamut from vague resolutions to "eat healthy" all the way to specifically planned out percentages of macronutrients and calories. While the latter may be overkill on the details for some people, the former is probably too vague for almost everyone. One common theme I've seen with diet resolutions is that people think they will kill all their vices in one fell swoop. Some

people can make a massive overnight change, but for many, this is what causes the repeat cycle of diet resolutions.

To get out of this cycle, I suggest monthly mini-resolutions. Small changes, even small enough that they seem too easy. But specific and trackable - yes, I'm talking about SMART goals. My plan for 2020 is to make mini-resolutions each month to work on small changes. I have trouble keeping hydrated, especially at work, so this year, my resolution for January is to drink 64 ounces of water each day. It's specific - not "drink more water," but drink 64 ounces. It's also trackable - there are apps on the phone or I can jot it in a notebook. I haven't set the other goals yet, but will be keeping in mind the three guidelines I use with patients:

1. Drink (enough) water.
2. Eat (more) vegetables.
3. Cut the junk (food).

These guidelines are included in almost every diet plan I've ever seen, are safe and are relevant no matter where you are starting. What is junk in my diet may look different than what is junk in your diet. Eating (more) vegetables may look very different for you than for your neighbor. But setting mini goals based on these guidelines ensures we're moving in the right direction. And if we meet these goals month after month, by the end of 2020, we will have achieved a significant and sustainable change. If that kind of plan sounds appealing to you, join me in making a mini resolution this year! Check out our blog on January 1st for more information.

If small goals don't appeal and you'd like



to make a larger goal, another option is to set the larger goal with a smaller time frame. I believe this is some of the appeal of the Whole 30 program. It can be a lot of changes for people depending on where their diet is starting, but it's just 30 days. You can do almost anything for 30 days, right? Once you succeed with 30 days and don't feel too deprived, you can often find yourself making more permanent changes as well.

I believe that small sustainable changes are the key to making lifestyle change stick, but however you go with your goals, I hope that you are successful and move yourself forward in your health journey. If you need specific guidance, the naturopathic physicians at True Health Medicine can partner with you on your healthcare and developing healthy habits. Happy New Year from all of us at True Health Medicine.



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