

SOLVE instead of RE-solving your Resolutions

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For many people the start of a new year marks the start of a new, healthier lifestyle. However, this becomes a short-lived practice for most. To see this new healthier you to the end, make the focus of this year's resolution to SOLVE not RE-SOLVE your 2009 health goals. What does this mean? It means evaluating your current eating practices, determining your greatest challenges and then setting small, reasonable health goals you can achieve.

Read the categories below to help evaluate your eating habits and define any problem areas you have.

FOOD TYPES

- People who eat more fast food, pre-packaged meals and foods that come in a box are less likely to eat more nutritious foods like fruit, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. Take a look at your grocery cart for the ratio of processed foods to fresh. If you rely on processed food way too often, start by adding a fresh food to your processed meal like fresh tomatoes to a frozen pizza. Then move onto learning an easy 15 minute recipe that uses 5 ingredients.

FOOD AWARENESS

- Being mindful of what you put in your mouth is key to long-term weight loss. Many times folks don't eat their food, they eat their job thoughts, worries or their next event. When you lack sensory nourishment you don't fully satisfy yourself. Remind yourself to sit down whenever you eat and focus on your food.

FOOD TO HELP FEELINGS

- Emotional eating is using food for reasons that have nothing to do with stomach hunger. Food is used to deal with feelings of sadness, anxiety, depression or frustration. The best approach is to determine what's getting you down and find help for that problem. It's best not to start working on your eating habits until you have your head feelings or heart feelings resolved.

FOOD FOR MOUTH FEEL

- Sometimes people eat for reasons that have nothing to do with hunger or emotions - it has to do with the mouth. Many people want a specific taste or texture - chewy, crunchy, salty or gooey food. They base what they crave on what would taste good or feel good on the tongue. It's difficult to prevail over the desire of the palate and respond only to the hunger from the stomach. For some, it's very difficult to get to like salads or whole grains, for others it's easy. Do what you can and aim for a healthy choice 80% of the time.

FOOD FREQUENCY & DISTRIBUTION

- How often you eat and how you distribute your calories can impact your goals. Aim to eat 60% of your food before the evening hours. Don't fall into the habit of crescendo eating which is eating lightly during the day and gorging on calories when you get home.

Once you've defined your challenges, set three small goals to begin such as:

- 1) **FOOD TYPE:** ensure you have a vegetable at dinner in the evening – this will get you thinking more and more about vegetables which is a step toward healthier eating and soon it may become automatic
- 2) **FOOD AWARENESS:** separate eating and activity (which means anytime you eat, sit down at a table and focus on your food)
- 2) **FOOD FOR MOUTH FEEL:** designate a special small bowl for desserts

Tracking goals is especially effective so feel free to act like a kid again and post a calendar on your refrigerator. Award yourself a star every day you complete your three goals. Don't choose goals that you have to think about too much because you're probably biting off more than you can chew. Small goals can have a major ripple effect resulting in permanent changed behavior.

The first step is to just start thinking about healthier practices. The more time you spend reminding yourself, the more likely the idea will become automatic – similar to brushing your teeth. Your mom started out reminding you to brush your teeth, which made you think about it every morning and night and soon it became automatic.

PRACTICE:

- The final step is to practice your goals every day. Behavioral changes can stick within six months. Some days will be easy, some will be extremely tough. Just remember, within four hours your food is digested which means you have a clean start every four hours – what an opportunity!

START YOUR NEW LIFE, INSTEAD OF REVISITING YOUR SAME
NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS!

If you have difficulty knowing what your healthy and unhealthy practices are or need some guidance with your eating plan, contact St Luke's Health Solutions dietitian Stacy Beeson at 381-2403.