

From the Nutritionist

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New Semester Resolutions

Did you make any New Year's Resolutions? Are you sticking with them? While resolutions can be made about anything a person wants to improve, some of the most common ones involve eating. Studies find that people who fully commit to making resolutions are 10 times more likely to reach their goals. However, there are a number of common mistakes that lead people to give up on their resolutions. If you aren't sticking with your New Year's Resolutions, or you didn't make any in the first place, you might want to consider making some *New Semester Resolutions*. Here are some tips for reaching your nutrition-related resolutions:

Start small – Many people try to completely overhaul their eating habits when they want to improve them. But too many changes at once can be overwhelming and hard to stick with. Start by making 1-2 small dietary changes and give yourself time to adjust before making more.

Skip the fads – Fad diets come and go, because they don't work in the long run. Any diet that requires you to eat only specialty foods or makes you feel chronically deprived is hard to stick with for long. Diets that promise *quick* weight loss rarely result in *lasting* weight loss. Make sensible choices that improve your eating habits in ways you can stick with for the long haul.

Keep the carbs – Carbohydrate is the primary fuel for the body, but many diet plans avoid, or severely limit, carbs. Living without carbs is like trying to drive a car without putting in gas. While it's true that taking in more carbs than your body needs adds extra calories to your diet, taking in too few doesn't give your body the energy it needs to get through the day. Limit sugars and highly processed grains, but be sure to include plenty of healthful carbohydrates in your diet like vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

Add stuff in – Thinking about never eating your favorite foods again can make you feel deprived. Instead, think about what you can add to your diet to make it more healthful – like a glass of water at each meal, an extra piece of fruit each day, or an extra serving of veggies at dinner. You'll add nutrients and over time, those extra foods will likely crowd out some of the less nutritious foods in your diet – but in a way that doesn't leave you feeling deprived.

Treat, don't cheat – The guilt associated with the idea of “cheating” on your eating plan can derail even the healthiest of diets. Treats are a normal part of a healthy, balanced diet, so build them in. No foods have to be completely off limits when you want to eat healthfully – you just need to figure out how much of, and how often, that food fits into your balanced eating plan.

Andrea Hart, registered dietitian nutritionist and New York state-certified dietitian/nutritionist, is available for free, confidential, one-on-one counseling and as a speaker or facilitator for campus groups, panels or classes.

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