



New Years Resolutions- an Invitation

Health is precious; and it is our responsibility to maintain it. Our healthful habits need adjusting as life changes and as we learn more. I invite you to choose 1-3 of the following suggestions to incorporate into *your* healthy New Year.

Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetable have amazing health benefits. Make a point of getting at least 5 servings a day and aim for 9. A serving is approximately 1/2 cup. Salads with lots of veggies is a good way to eat more. Expand your experience with new fruits and vegetables, and try out a variety of preparation techniques. When you focus on getting more fruits and vegetables, you tend to eat less junk!



Eat More Whole Grains

When you eat grains in their whole form, you are eating them the way nature made them. When carbohydrates are refined, the very vitamins and minerals we need to digest them are stripped away. Complex (high fiber) carbohydrates add roughage to our diet (keeping our GI system healthy), are more filling (so we eat less), and are absorbed more slowly (keeping our blood sugar more steady and our energy level more even). The USDA recommendation is to get at least 3 servings of whole grains a day. I'd suggest limiting refined carbohydrates as much as you can; it's a great way to cut calories.

Choose Healthy Fats

Use olive and canola oils, or other monounsaturated fats. Nuts are a source of good fat, especially walnuts. There is increasing evidence that including more omega 3 fats provides protection from the inflammatory processes that we see in so many of the chronic diseases (including heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and Alzheimer's). The current recommendation is to get at least two servings of fish a week, but if you have heart disease or other conditions related to inflammation, consider taking fish oil supplements. Look for 3:1 omega-3 to omega-6, and aim for 1000 ml day. Check with your doctor, especially if you take blood-thinning meds.

Eat Regularly and Frequently

Start your day with breakfast. It wakes up your metabolism and sets you up for better food choices throughout the day, especially if you include complex carbohydrates and lean protein. Eat all three meals, and add snacks as needed. Most people do best with a mid-afternoon snack to avoid going into dinner famished (and then eating all evening). Have a plan for what to eat, it will help you stick to healthy choices.

Ask If You are Hungry

Before you eat, check to see if you are hungry. We eat for many reasons. Sometimes it is just habit, and often it has nothing to do with physical hunger. Are you hungry, or are you thirsty, tired, restless, upset, etc? Food is always a choice, but there could be a better alternative.

Notice How Different Foods Feel in your Body

Notice how you feel when you eat healthy foods. Notice how you feel when you eat foods high in sugars and fats. No need to pass judgment: just notice. Which food choices and patterns give you the most stable and consistent energy?

Choose Healthy Beverages

Beverages can pack hidden calories. Some people can lose weight just by limiting their consumption of alcohol or sugared beverages (think coffee drinks, sweetened iced teas, juices). Drink water regularly throughout the day.

Enjoy Your Food

People tell me they enjoy food, but often what they enjoy is the idea of food. Many of us don't even taste what we are eating. We eat fast and unconsciously. When you slow down and actually experience your food, your whole relationship with eating changes. When you can allow yourself what you want and give yourself the chance to truly enjoy it, you find that you are satisfied and can stop sooner.

Move More

Exercise may be the most important thing you can do, and a combination of staying active *and* making healthy food choices is your best health insurance. The ideal is a combination of aerobic activity, strength building, stretching and balance. Start slow and build gradually. Find the ways that you enjoy the most to keep you motivated and consistent.

Come to my Class!

I have two classes starting in January! There is a two-hour in-person class called Healthy Nutrition Habits Jan 18, 4-6 pm, and offered again Feb 13, 1-3 pm. The other class is a 5 week teleclass (by phone), which also focuses on developing healthy habits but allows more time to experiment with what works best in *your* life, and creating the habits that work best for you. See my website for more information. Call or email to register 707 431-7524; kathy@kathynichols.net.

Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Health and Wellness Coaching and Nutrition Consulting. Learn to make conscious choices.

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(707) 431-7524 or kathy@kathynichols.net