

Happy Healthy New Year

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Every year “losing weight”, “eating healthier”, and “getting fit” seem to make the list of popular New Year’s goals. It can be difficult to manage your food intake and it is easy to understand why. Look at what you are faced with: appetizer plates, high calorie drinks, candy trays, and restaurant meals with questionable calorie content! Here are some guidelines to help you make healthier decisions in 2014. Hopefully they will help you achieve your goals while still allowing you to enjoy yourself!

- Do not get in the habit of telling yourself, “I can’t have _____.” Instead, allow yourself to have a little. Proper portion sizes are key. Usually indulging in a small portion of something you are really craving will help with self-control and prevent overeating later.
- Find a “share-some” buddy. This is especially effective when dining out at restaurants. Order one entrée between two people and ask for a second plate. If you do not have anyone to share with, ask your server to bring a to-go box with your food. Split it up right away and consume the portion that is left on your plate.
- Have a healthy snack before a party or get-together where there will be food. You will be less likely to over-eat if you are not starving. You will also be less likely to fill up on bread or calorie dense appetizers. The same rule applies for trips to the grocery store. Never grocery shop when you are hungry! Things you never dreamt of buying will find their way into your cart if you have an empty, growling stomach.
- Stock up on healthy items and do not keep junk food at home. If you are not hungry enough to eat an apple, you are probably not hungry. This also helps to curb boredom eating.
- Keep track of your food. Smart phones have a plethora of apps available for this very purpose. There are also some websites that offer food logs online. You can even just keep a log on a piece of paper or in a planner. No matter how you choose to do it, keeping a food log helps you to be more mindful of what you eat. Mindful eating helps us to eat less and to make better choices.
- Don’t forget your work out! Physical activity is as every bit as important as diet when it comes to staying healthy. Even if you are just taking a short walk you are still lapping everyone on the couch.

If you’d like to learn more about ways to achieve your weight loss goals in 2014, please visit a registered dietitian and/or check out www.eatright.org.



Jen Hanlon is a dietetic technician, registered and member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is currently a Dietetic Intern at WVU Healthcare and plans to become a registered dietitian. As the nation's food and nutrition experts, registered dietitians are committed to improving the health of their communities. To find a registered dietitian in your area, visit www.eatright.org and click on “Find a Registered Dietitian.”