What your New Years Resolutions should be

Whether or not you make resolutions, consider this your year for health. A decade ago, the government put out ideal standards on what our nation’s health status should look like in the year 2010. Looking around, you could probably infer that we are not the ideal depiction of health. Here are NutriCat’s top health resolutions to make:

- **Regular Workouts.** Not only do workouts lower your risk of stroke, diabetes, Alzheimer's, heart disease, and certain types of cancer, it also protects against colds and flu. Physical activity helps keep your weight in check and is a great way to reduce stress. In order to reap the benefits, you’ve got to do more than 30 minutes, two to three times per week. 30-45 minutes of moderate intensity exercise daily should be the norm. The average American is sedentary for 19 hours a day, so 45 minutes isn’t too much to devote to getting up and moving. Looking to jump-start your fitness routine? Consider a personal trainer at the Baun Student Fitness Center. For a fraction of the cost at other gyms, you can have a trainer create a personalized plan for you and provide motivation as you workout.

- **More fruits and vegetables, fewer overly processed foods.** We all know that fruits and vegetables are good for us. They contain antioxidants and phytochemicals that help protect against chronic diseases and keep our skin looking young. Fruits and vegetables, in their natural state, also contain insoluble and soluble fiber which can lower cholesterol, reduce risk of heart disease, and prevent constipation. The other benefit of consuming more fruits and vegetables? NOT consuming the other stuff. The ‘fake’ food; loaded with chemicals, artificial preservatives, and not much else. Reducing your intake of processed foods means you’ll be filling up on nutrient dense foods, helping the environment, your GI tract, and your weight. Stick to the outer perimeter of the grocery store where natural foods are generally kept. And check labels for sodium nitrate, potassium bromate, acesulfame potassium, partially hydrogenated oils, and artificial food colors. All have been shown to be possible carcinogens. Just as you wouldn’t eat chemicals brewing in a science lab, keep them out of your food.

- **Eat more fats and carbohydrates.** You read that right. After the low-carb phase of the past decade, most people are filling their plates up with lots of protein, and little else in search of weight-loss magic. Unsaturated fats, found in oils, nuts, seeds, fish, and avocados (to name a few), protect your heart and aid in vitamin absorption. Two tablespoons per day is a good portion control to receive the healthy benefits. Whole grains, like brown rice, oats, corn, and wheat provide necessary fuel to your brain, heart, and nervous system. Grain products also supply B (energy) vitamins, fiber, and trace minerals. As with any food, portion control is needed. One serving of whole grains is equivalent to 1/2 cup of cereal, pasta, rice and 1 slice of bread or one tortilla. Finally, when choosing protein, ‘lean and less’ is more. Diets with more than 30% calories from protein cause a toxic buildup of ketone bodies. This could possibly cause dehydration which strains your kidneys and your heart. Ideally, protein should make up about 15% of your daily calories. Try legumes, beans, nuts, and wild fish for more variety than the usual beef or chicken. A serving of protein is 3-4 oz., roughly the size of a deck of cards. As always, natural foods are always better than processed meats. Besides being full of dangerous nitrates, processed meats are usually high in sodium. Try lean roast beef instead of hotdogs or hamburgers; fresh fish instead of fish sticks; and rinse your beans under water after removing them from the can to reduce sodium content.

For a healthier you, try these tips listed above. But remember, habits take time. Make a list of why you want to make healthier changes: an upcoming event, your family, more energy, weight loss, etc. Research shows if you focus on the ‘why’ you will be more able to stick to it! Need daily motivation? Friend NutriCat on Facebook or email her at nutricat@pacific.edu
**Olive Oil:** Full of monounsaturated fats which promote heart health. Extra virgin olive oil also contains polyphenols that reduce inflammation and may reduce some types of cancer. Olive Oil is best used for dressings, marinades, and low heat cooking as high temperatures will cause burning.

**Vegetable Oil:** Usually made from soybeans, it is high in linoleic acid, a good source of Omega-6 fatty acids. Vegetable oil is usually cheap and can be heated to very high temperatures.

**Canola Oil:** Made from seeds of the canola plant, it is the lowest in saturated fats. Canola is great for baking and all purpose cooking, as it has little flavor and a high smoke point.

**Peanut Oil:** Made from ground peanuts, it is very popular in Asian cuisine. It can be heated to very high temperatures which makes it ideal for frying and stir-frying. High in vitamin E, it also contains 20% saturated fat.

**Sunflower Oil:** Made by crushing black sunflower seeds, sunflower oil is high in Vitamin E and linoleic acid. It is also a high heat oil and heart friendly for frying and wok-cooking.

**Sesame Oil:** Made from white and dark sesame seeds, this oil has great flavor and is ideal in dressings, marinades, and Asian sauces. Sesame Oil is high in Vitamin E, an antioxidant found in nuts and seeds.

**Corn Oil:** Made from...you guessed it—corn. Made from the kernel and germ, this oil is cholesterol free but high in saturated fat (13%). This is a high heat oil that is inexpensive and great for all-purpose cooking.

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**Buffalo Chicken Dip**

- 2 cans chicken breast OR 2 chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
- 8 oz. light cream cheese
- 1/2 cup Frank’s Red Hot sauce
- 1/2 cup part-skim shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup fat-free ranch dressing
- 1/4 cup Greek yogurt (try Fage 0%)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix cream cheese in medium-size bowl. Add hot sauce, cheese, ranch, and yogurt and mix until blended. Stir in chicken. Place in a baking dish and cook for 20 minutes.

**Portabella Skins**

- 4 portabella mushrooms
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2/3 cup light, shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 small tomato, seeded and chopped
- 1 tbsp. minced fresh chives

Preheat oven to 450. Pat mushroom dry and place on baking sheet, lined with foil. Brush mushrooms with oil and sprinkle stem side with salt and pepper. Divide cheese among mushrooms and bake for 10 minutes, until cheese melts. Remove from oven and top with bacon, tomato, and chives. Bake for another 5 minutes or until hot.

**BEST swap for 7-Layer Dip**

- 4 cups shredded lettuce
- 4 oz. fat-free sour cream
- 1 cup canned black beans, heated
- 2 1/2 cups butternut squash cubes
- 2 cups tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup diced onion
- 4 oz. roasted red pepper
- 4 oz. Boca Ground Burger (or meat substitute)
- 1 oz. low-fat cheddar cheese
- 3 1/2 tsp. taco seasoning

Combine 1/2 of tomatoes with the onion and set aside. Microwave squash with 2 tbsp. water for 6-7 minutes. Mash squash, add 1 1/2 tsp of taco seasoning and set aside. Heat in a skillet, boca burger, tomatoes, and rest of taco seasoning. In a large dish layer: lettuce, squash mixture, tomato/onion mixture, sour cream, black beans, “meat” mixture, cheese, red peppers.

Recipes: hungry-girl.com