

New Year's Resolution

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

"I made a new year's resolution of healthy eating for my children, but I'm not sure I'm on the right track. Where can I start?"

New Year's is a time for re-starting, to evaluate our habits of the past and make changes to become a better person in the New Year. The holidays are over; therefore it is a good time to clean out the junk food and replace it with healthy foods. Obviously, children are too young to make their own resolutions, but depending on your child's age, their level of participation can vary.

For all ages, if you offer healthy choices they will choose from those healthy choices. They do not have a job or a driver's license so they cannot go to the store and buy junk food. Only you can.

Taking toddlers and preschoolers to the grocery store provides an excellent opportunity to learn about fruits and vegetables. Staying on the perimeter of the store avoids processed foods. Allow your children to sample the fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and cheeses offered in the store.

Read books about eating healthy to toddlers and preschoolers. The Hungry Caterpillar is a familiar example of a book about eating. Discuss healthy choices and why they are important.

Older children can help read labels identifying healthy and unhealthy ingredients. In my family, if we do not know what an ingredient is or we cannot pronounce it, (sodium acid pyrophosphate for example) we don't buy it. It can become a great learning experience on many levels.

Maybe start small so that unlike most Americans, you can keep your New Year's resolution.

Try to switch brands of a familiar food to a more healthy choice. (Whole grain goldfish for example, can replace the "flavor blasted" or "colors" goldfish.

If you frequent fast food restaurants, limit that frequency or choose more healthy choices on the menu. Many fast food restaurants are offering a greater choice of more healthy foods.

Replace sodas and fruit juices (glorified sugar) to water or watered down versions of juice.

Add one extra fruit or vegetable per day.

Sneak pureed vegetables in spaghetti sauce or flax seed powder in brownies. There are many ways to be a sneaky chef.

Switch one snack to a healthier version of that snack or replace with carrots or raisins.

Being creative and staying realistic will enable you to reach your goal towards healthy eating. If you provide healthy food choices and remove or limit unhealthy options for yourself, you will model healthy eating for your children. They in turn, will begin to make better healthy eating choices.