



HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

Resolutions are Fine – But Action is Better

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Here it is again – New Years. Like many people, you have probably made a few New Year's resolutions in your lifetime related to healthier eating and maybe even weight control. And like most people, you never get past the Super Bowl party with your resolution intact. Since a resolution is a decision to make a change and not an action that produces change, it is easy to see why so many resolutions never produce the desired result.

So this year try a new approach. Instead of making a resolution to eat healthier or lose weight, one that is likely to quickly fade away; why not create an action plan that will provide positive rewards within the first week? It's easy! All you need is a pencil, a piece of paper, and a little bit of determination to be on your way to a healthier you! There are only five steps to creating an action plan.

- **Step number 1** – choose something YOU WANT to do. Many of us do things we think we SHOULD do or something *someone else* wants or thinks we should do. This important first step really needs to be something YOU WANT to do. For example, maybe you think you SHOULD start cooking from all those healthy food cookbooks in your garage, but if you don't WANT to, your action plan will likely end before it even gets off the ground. Maybe a loved one thinks you should keep a food diary of everything you eat, but you would rather run your fingernails down a chalkboard.
- Now that you have decided on something YOU WANT to do, move on to **step number 2** – choose something that is achievable in one week's time. Doing an action plan each week will help you take small steps to your long-term goal of healthier eating or losing weight.
- **Step 3** – choose something that is action-specific. This means you need to “do” something. Eating healthier or losing weight are great goals, but they are not actions. For instance, maybe you will choose to eat fruit for your afternoon snack instead of that candy bar from the vending machine; or maybe you will skip that second helping at dinner.
- **Step 4** – answer the following questions: What will you do? How much will you do it? When will you do it? How often will you do it? An example of an action plan would be to eat your favorite fruit (what), one cup (how much), for an afternoon snack (when), 3 days this week (how often).

- **Finally, step 5** – make sure it is something you have a confidence level of at least a 7 out of 10 that you can accomplish it. Otherwise, it is likely you won't complete your action plan.

For tips on ideas for other healthier eating action plans visit www.MyPyramid.gov

To find a Registered Dietitian, a nutrition expert, in your area, go to www.eatright.org/programs/rdfinder

Dr. Diana Yu is the Health Officer for the
Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department
www.co.thurston.wa.us/health
360-867-2500