



What will the New Year bring for your health? Many of us are hoping to improve our health in the coming year. A restrictive diet is **NOT** the best way to achieve this! Small lifestyle changes that you can maintain your whole life will help you to accomplish your health goals. Here are some very simple and sensible steps you may want to consider for improving your nutrition in 2007!

1. Don't drink your calories!

Sweetened beverages usually will not quench your thirst and they provide many empty calories. Also, unlike eating solid food, drinking liquid calories doesn't make you feel full so you generally eat the same amount. Cutting out one can of pop or another sugared beverage a day can help you lose 15 pounds a year! Water is the best thirst quencher and something your body needs daily!

2. Choose snacks with nutrition!

Snacks do not have to be junk food or sweets! Choose snacks that offer your body nutrition. If you need more calcium, consider low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese and fruit or a low-fat cheese stick. If your diet is lacking in whole grains, have a half a peanut butter sandwich on 100% whole wheat bread or 3 cups of light popcorn or a whole grain granola bar (look for one with a decent amount of protein and fiber such as Kashi brand). Snacks can fill the gap between meals and help to keep your blood sugar stable and keep you energized.

3. Fill your plate with vegetables!

Vegetables are loaded with vitamins and antioxidants, especially those with deep colors. They also low in calories and offer fiber to fill you up. Whether they are fresh, canned or frozen, make sure to keep them on hand and keep them handy throughout the day to keep you satisfied!

4. Eat Breakfast!

After a long night your body needs fuel to operate so provide it with a healthy start to the day! There is no calorie savings in skipping breakfast here as studies have shown that people who eat breakfast regularly are better able to control their weight. In general, skipping meals results in increased total calorie intake later in the day.

5. Eat more whole grains!

Whole grains are more nutritious and more satisfying. They help protect against many chronic diseases and help to lower blood cholesterol levels. Find a whole grain bread and cereal you enjoy, try brown rice or whole wheat pasta (or really get adventurous and try bulgur or whole wheat couscous or quinoa!) How about a whole grain cracker such as Triscuit or Ry-Krisp? Have you seen the 100% whole grain Fig Newtons?

6. Stretch yourself to try some new foods!

This can be a way to add variety and more nutrition to your eating. We all get comfortable eating the same foods so you may need to make a conscious effort to achieve this. Add one new item or recipe to your shopping list each week or try something new and unusual when you eat out.

Have you ever tried hummus? How about rutabaga or sweet potatoes? Bok Choy? Tofu? Flaxseed? Our supermarkets are full new things to experience! Try to make this a whole food choice rather than a new product that is processed.

I have attached a couple of very easy fish recipes since this is something many people avoid as they aren't sure how to prepare it. These can be fixed in just a few minutes using either fresh or frozen (thawed) fish of any kind. Fish is a wonderful source of lean protein and the American Heart Association suggests we consume it at least two times a week. If you are concerned about the amount of mercury or PCB's in fish, here is a federal advisory on this topic. <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fishadvice/factsheet.html>

Many New Year resolutions fail because they are nothing more than wishes. It is not about how much willpower you have! In order to achieve your resolutions or goals you need a **workable plan**. Sometimes it works better to choose just **one** goal at a time. This will help you to stay focused and not feel like your entire life is changing. Make a commitment to the goal and promise yourself that setbacks will not cause you to abandon your goal. **Break your goal into manageable pieces or steps**. Make each step measurable and specific. For example, if your goal is to become more active, then one action step might be "I will walk to and from work on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the next 6 weeks." From there you need to make a **plan of action** on how you will accomplish this! This may require you to alter some of your usual behaviors to make this happen—such as getting out of bed 30 minutes earlier. You may need warmer gloves or an umbrella to keep you warm and dry on days with less than desirable weather. Perhaps music you enjoy will keep you motivated. List everything you can think of that will help you in accomplishing your goal. **Put your plan into writing!** Consider a **reward system** for incentive to keep you on track. Perhaps each day you follow your plan, you put a dollar in a jar. At the end of the time period, you can buy something as a reward for following through with your goal. An important thing to remember is that no plans are set in concrete! If you find you are feeling like a failure because you can't follow through, reevaluate your plan and your goal to make sure they are realistic!

Do you need help and accountability in setting goals for your lifestyle change? Call 4-9625 or e-mail for an appointment today and I will be happy to help you get started!

If you want to be more active in 2007, consider forming or joining a Lighten Up Iowa team with your family, friends or co-workers. Last year participants accumulated more than 5 million miles of activity and lost a total of 69 tons! This program is definitely changing the shape of Iowa!

Lighten Up Iowa Program

ISU employees are invited to form teams (2-10 people, including a captain) to participate in the statewide "[Lighten Up Iowa](#)" program (Jan. 10-May 10). This team-based program helps Iowans make changes toward a healthier lifestyle. The fee is \$12/person. Hy-Vee offers a \$5 off promo code in its Jan. 3 flier for those registering online. ISU teams are asked to add "ISU" to their team name. If your team wishes to be eligible for prizes from the Ames Community, you must register under "Companies and Organizations" on the Web site, and use the code name LUIAMES.

Questions can be directed to Sally Barclay, Nutrition Clinic for Employee Wellness, 4-9625,
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A happy and healthy 2007 to each of you!!

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