REFRESH YOUR GOALS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Starting a new year is an opportunity to refresh your health goals. If you have ever set goals to get your health on track, taking time to reflect and reassess your goals is an important step to help you stay motivated and moving forward. Whether you have already reached a big wellness goal, or your goals have taken a back seat, seeing where you wanted to be when you first set your goals can be an excellent way to build motivation and make more progress.

The first step is taking note of how far you have already come. Any progress made toward better health is worthwhile. It is easy to notice big changes, but sometimes we lose sight of the small victories along the way.

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You may not be at the activity or nutrition goal that you set out for, but you have taken steps to get there. Setting a goal is a huge first step in improving your health, because you cared enough to aim for a better future.

Now that you have looked back on your progress so far, you can decide if the goal you previously set for yourself is still your goal. You may have realized in your journey to better health that the goal was easy for you to reach and that you could go even further. Or you may have realized that the goal you originally set was not actually right for you. For example, you set a goal to run a race, but you have found that dancing is more enjoyable for you and gentler on your body. While it may seem wrong to shift the goalpost, remember that your goals are for you, and they are meant to adjust as you change. When we build endurance, we walk farther. When we get stronger, we lift more weight.

Refreshing your goals can look like adjusting to fit the present and future, but it can also be adding goals that you didn’t have before.

Below we will discuss some examples of small shifts that can have a huge impact.

1. Add 1 serving of a fruit or vegetable to your day. Whether that’s adding an apple as a snack in the morning or adding a serving of roasted Brussels sprouts to your plate at dinner, find a place to add a serving of fruits or veggies to your daily routine.

2. Find one or two fun physical activities that you can do for 5 minutes. Do them anytime you have 5 minutes to spare. If you’re waiting for your food to finish cooking or taking a brain break from work, you can fill that time with 5 minutes of physical activity to get your heart pumping.

Examples include standing or sitting jumping jacks, holding your arms out horizontally with or without weights, light stretching, or practicing your balance on one leg.

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3. Get more fiber by reading nutrition labels. Aim for foods with 3 grams of fiber or more per serving.

4. Finally, if you haven’t visited your primary care physician in more than a year, make a goal to set an appointment for the new year. Meeting with your healthcare team can give you an opportunity to make sure that your treatment plan and medications are still right for you. Your needs may have adjusted with any lifestyle changes that have occurred over the last year.

THE POWER OF PEANUTS

There is a lot to juggle when managing diabetes. You want to get plenty of exercise, make nutritious food choices, and maintain a healthy weight. It can be hard to balance it all, but it is important for your health. A great tool to include in your nutrition toolbox are peanuts.

Although peanuts are small, they can provide big benefits to people with diabetes. Peanuts are powerhouses of protein, heart-healthy fats, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. One ounce of peanuts has 4.6 grams of carbohydrates, which makes them a low carbohydrate food and easy to fit into your diabetes-friendly eating plan. Peanuts also have 2.4 grams of fiber and 7.3 grams of protein per 1-ounce serving.(1) Protein and fiber help you feel full sooner and stay full longer. Adding protein and fiber to foods that have carbohydrates can help reduce blood glucose spikes. In the past, a low-fat diet was widely recommended for most people. However, further research has found benefits to eating certain types of fats.

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Healthy fats, such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, can help maintain cholesterol levels in a normal range. This has the potential to decrease the risk of heart disease.

Fat can also help slow the increase in blood glucose that happens after eating food containing carbohydrates. So, it’s not surprising that studies have shown that eating peanuts can help with long-term blood sugar control, weight management, diabetes, and cholesterol levels.(2)

In fact, a recent study showed that by eating 35g (1oz) of peanuts before two main meals a day, an adult at risk for diabetes can lose the same amount of weight as one on a low-fat diet. There was also a decrease in blood pressure levels which may lower cardiovascular disease (CVD).(3) So, not only can peanuts help with weight control, they can also help with that other big risk for people with diabetes: heart disease. Lastly, peanuts are a good source of plant protein.

Eating more plant protein and less animal protein is associated with a reduced risk of death from any cause and cardiovascular disease and eating a plant-based diet reduces the risk of some cancers.(4) Peanuts are a food that can help you meet many of your nutrition goals.

Peanuts also are a low-cost option to help maintain overall health when eaten as part of a balanced diet. In the United States, peanuts are one of the most affordable and available protein products in grocery stores.(2) Combine the affordability and availability of peanuts with their long shelf life and you have a great staple for your pantry.

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Dry roasted peanuts make a great snack on their own. You can also combine peanut butter with vegetables like celery or carrots to make eating peanuts even more enjoyable and get a serving of veggies too. You can top salads, noodle dishes, and soups with peanuts for extra crunch. Try adding a tablespoon of peanut butter to your yogurt or oatmeal for a satisfying boost of protein and healthy fats.

You can even buy dehydrated peanut powder in grocery stores. Why would you want peanut powder? Peanut powder can be used for smoothies, popcorn, pancake mix, and as a way to introduce peanuts to infants. It can be mixed with water to create a smooth texture and is less sticky than traditional peanut butter or nuts, which can be a choking hazard for young children.

Did you know that introducing infants to peanut-containing foods between 4 to 6 months can reduce the risk of peanut allergy? So, if you’re a caregiver to an infant, be sure to check out preventpeanutallergies.org for more information on how to introduce peanuts safely.(5)

Peanuts are a healthy food not just for people with diabetes, but for the whole family. Try our featured recipe for crunchy honey peanut chicken to enjoy all the benefits peanuts have to offer.
PICKING FRUITS AND VEGGIES THAT LAST

Fruits and vegetables taste amazing and are a great option for a speedy snack or nutritious meal. Besides this, they have a lot of the vitamins and minerals that our bodies need to stay healthy and fight off illness. The only problem is, whether you grow or buy your produce, perishable food eventually goes bad. So, what can we do to keep our fruits and vegetables fresh for longer?

In last summer’s Diabetes Life Lines newsletter, we talked about different ways to preserve your garden grown produce. (6) In the article, we used a freezer, oven, and stove to make our fruits and vegetables last longer. Did you know that there are other ways to keep your produce lasting longer? It is all about selecting the right fruits and vegetables and storing them in the right places.

In this article, we will talk about fruits and vegetables that are low-cost and low maintenance. What’s more important than your food being ready to eat, when you’re ready to eat it?

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Buy under ripe fruits and vegetables: Not everything you buy at the grocery store must be ripe and ready to eat. Did you know after harvesting, some produce can continue to ripen? (7) Next time you go to the grocery store, consider buying under ripe fruits. Under ripe fruits are usually firm but will soften over time to give you fresh produce for weeks on end. Place unripe fruits in a paper grocery bag to speed ripening if needed.

Examples of good items to buy when under ripe are apples, bananas, tomatoes, avocados, peaches, nectarines, pears, or cantaloupe. Save these for later in your menu rotation and be sure to use up any ripe produce first.

Apples are a great fruit option because they are low-cost (less than $1.50 per pound)8 and can remain fresh for a long time when stored properly. Store apples in your refrigerator, separate from other foods, and they can remain fresh for two to four months.(9) Serve them fresh out of hand or sliced dipped in peanut butter or sprinkled with cinnamon.

Carrots sell for very cheap (less than $1.00 per pound) and last a surprising amount of time. The most common type of carrot has no green leaves, or just one inch of green stems at the top of the carrot. We call these types of carrots “topped carrots” and they can last for five to six months when stored in the refrigerator. (10, 11) Carrots can add extra flavor and fiber to many dishes, like soups and stews. You can also slice them into sticks for a crunchy, fresh snack with hummus or yogurt based dips. Whole carrots tend to be less expensive than baby carrots, which are usually smaller pieces cut from larger carrots. Baby carrots or cut carrots can save you time in the kitchen, but won’t last as long as whole carrots.

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Oranges cost less than $1.50 per pound. (8) You will find the oranges in your local grocery store piled in the center of the store, outside the refrigerated shelves. Once you buy the oranges, store them in your refrigerator for up to three months. (9) Look for easy to peel, seedless citrus like satsuma mandarin oranges, grown in Georgia.

Leafy Greens such as lettuce are great to keep in your home. You can add lettuce to your sandwiches, salads, or wraps. If you find your lettuce wilting quickly, try wetting a paper towel with water and storing it in your lettuce container. On the other hand, if you find your lettuce collecting water and going bad quickly, try adding a dry paper towel to soak up the extra water. Both methods can help your produce stay fresh for longer. (7)

Did you know?
Storing food at the right temperature helps it last longer and stay safe. Keep your refrigerator at 40 degrees F (4 degrees C) and your freezer at –18 degrees F (0 degrees C) or below. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature periodically. (12)
RECIPE CORNER: CRUNCHY HONEY PEANUT CHICKEN
Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients:
1 tablespoon flour
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon dried tarragon
½ cup prepared mustard
2 tablespoons honey
1 cup unsalted dry-roasted peanuts, finely chopped
4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
2 tablespoons butter or plant-based margarine

Preparation:
1. In a pie pan or shallow bowl, combine flour, seasoned salt, garlic powder and tarragon; mix well.
2. In a second pie pan or bowl, combine mustard and honey.
3. Place peanuts in third pan or bowl.
4. Dip each chicken breast in flour mixture, then honey mustard, and finally in peanuts to coat.
5. Heat butter in a 10- or 12-inch skillet; add chicken and cook over medium-low heat until cooked through and golden brown, 4-5 minutes per side.

Source: www.nationalpeanutboard.org

Nutrition Facts (Per 1 chicken breast):
587 calories, 30g fat, 0g trans-fat, 166 mg cholesterol, 21g carbohydrate, 59 protein, 1067 mg sodium
REFERENCES

Dear Friend,

*Diabetes Life Lines* is a bi-monthly publication sent to you by your local county Extension agent.

It is written by an Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist and other health professionals from the University of Georgia. This newsletter brings you the latest information on diabetes self-management, healthy recipes, and news about important diabetes-related events.

If you would like more information, please contact your local county Extension Office.

Yours truly,

County Extension Agent

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