

Fresh Start to Better Choices

By Suze Hargraves

I'm going to start from the end. You're on the scale. You see you've gained a few pounds. You're thinking to yourself, "But I ate the vegetable platter (thoughtful pause...) and I didn't use that much dip." Do yourself a favor and get off the scale. Stop thinking about what you did or didn't do. It's all in the past. The only thing you can change is today and what lies ahead. This is not about New Year's resolutions. Don't fall into that trap. We're not going to "resolve" to lose those few pounds or any pounds for that matter. We're going to make better choices.

The Center for Disease Control reports: "In 2007--2008, based on measured weights and heights, approximately 72.5 million adults in the United States were obese (CDC, unpublished data, 2010). Obese adults are at increased risk for many serious health conditions, including coronary heart disease, hypertension, stroke, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, and premature death." Sadly, the numbers are going up every year. Americans are getting fatter and we're getting sicker. We don't seem to making good choices, but we can fix that.

In order to make good choices about what we eat we need to have information about what we're consuming. Simple things and minor changes can make a big difference. Pour a half a cup of gravy over your meal and you've added 150 calories. Add a pad of butter to a roll and tack on 45 calories. Switching to things like low fat options and whole grains while choosing to forgo sugary, fatty and processed foods will make a big difference. Nutrition.gov and Familydoctor.org both have some easy to use lists to help you on your way to making better choices. Journaling (writing down what you eat and how much you exercise) is also an easy way to keep track of the decisions you're making and has proven to change dietary habits and intake of high fat, salt and sugary foods and liquids.

Getting to and maintaining a healthy weight isn't about a "diet" or a resolution. It's about changing the way you think and feel about food and exercise. It's about making conscious decisions to live better and feel better. No more reaching for "something" out of habit or simplicity. No more sliding into lazy habits without thinking. You have to decide that you are important enough to warrant making positive changes through positive choices. Decide today to live longer and live healthier.

Make today and every day a fresh start in making healthy choices.

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