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## Healthy New Year's Resolutions

Did you make a New Year's resolution to improve your health by losing weight and getting more physical activity on a regular basis? Although the typical holiday weight gain is only one pound, many of us are motivated to lose weight at the beginning of the year.

The healthiest and most effective way to shed pounds is to make lifestyle changes, such as decreasing food portion sizes and increasing intensity or amount of physical activity. Maintaining a healthy weight requires a balance of energy intake (calories) and exercise.

To consume fewer calories without cutting out your favorite foods:

1. Plan your meals and snacks, always including plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Get the most nutrition from the calories you consume. To make smart choices from every food group, refer to these fact sheets: [HGIC 4000, 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#); [HGIC 4010, MyPyramid](#); [HGIC 4011, MyPyramid for Kids](#) and [HGIC 4012, 30 MyPyramid Steps to a Healthier You](#).
2. When eating out, choose regular or child-sized portions. Say no to super-sizing.
3. Use a smaller plate so you think that you are getting more food. Do not eat directly from a bag or box, because it's hard to judge how much you are eating.
4. Portion meals at the stove instead of the table. This makes it less tempting to overeat.
5. Think twice before taking out a second helping. It takes the brain about 20 minutes to realize that the stomach is full.
6. Read the Nutrition Facts Label on food packaging. This label helps you choose nutritious foods, correct portion sizes and calories. For more information, see [HGIC 4056, Reading the New Food Labels](#).
7. Drink water and lower-fat milk instead of sugary drinks.

Adults should get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days, preferably every day. To sneak more exercise into your daily routine:

1. Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
2. Enjoy a brisk 15-minute walk during your lunch break.
3. Walk the dog every day. He needs the exercise, too.

4. Walk up and down the sidelines during your child's soccer, baseball or football games.
5. Use a push mower to mow the lawn.
6. Grow a garden. You will benefit from the increased physical activity, and the fresh vegetables will be an added nutrition bonus.

For more information on increasing the intensity or amount of your daily physical activity, refer to: [HGIC 4030, \*Physical Activity Pyramid\*](#); [HGIC 4031, \*Physical Activity for Adults\*](#) and [HGIC 4032, \*Physical Activity for Children\*](#).

To view the above fact sheets, or if you have additional questions, please visit our Home and Garden Information Center website at <http://hgic.clemson.edu> or call the Extension office at 803-635-4722.

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