



# Nutrition News - February 2022

## Staying Resolute On Resolutions

New Year's resolutions are often short-lived - but there are research-backed strategies to help you keep whatever nutrition-related resolutions you've tried to make.

**Refine Your Resolution:** Clearly defined and realistic resolutions that include a specific timeframe are more likely to be maintained than vague aspirations. It's not enough to resolve to be more physically active or to eat better. You'll need to be more specific. An effective way to make your resolutions more concrete is to use the SMART approach: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

**Choose Wisely:** There's no end, especially this time of year, to the myriad of advice, programs, and products that claim to help people make healthy lifestyle changes. Your challenge is to separate the fad diets from nutritionally-sound planning. Advice from government (like OFA), healthcare, or educational institutions is likely to be more accurate than advice from sites that feature a lot of product advertising. Look for multiple strong sources offering the same advice. It is also essential to aim for sustainable behavior change. For example, a weight loss diet that involves radical dietary changes may lead to good results in the short term, but can be challenging for many to sustain over the long haul. Instead, take sensible, incremental steps toward a healthier overall dietary pattern. Likewise, slowly adding activity beyond your current level is safer (and more effective long-term) than jumping into overly-ambitious changes.

**Be Accountable:** Holding yourself accountable can be very motivating. Write your goals down in

a journal, into a smart phone app, or on a post-it-note stuck to the refrigerator—anywhere you will see them often to keep you focused. Then, share your plan with a partner, friend, or family member, and consider sending them updates.

Being accountable to others can help you stay on track for the longer term too. A study published in the journal *BMC Women's Health* found that among women age 40 to 62 years, social support was an important factor to keeping up adherence to a 12-month at-home exercise program. This could involve inviting friends and family to join in exercise activities like a neighborhood walk or classes at a local park, community center or fitness center. Any scenario where you commit to doing something with a group makes you more likely to show up because others expect and rely on you to be there.

**Do What You Enjoy:** Choose a resolution that you like. You're more likely to stick to dietary changes if you don't feel deprived. Likewise, choosing a physical activity you actually enjoy will make it more likely you'll continue doing it. Some people prefer a social setting like group exercise classes or a team sport, while others would rather take a solitary walk or dance to their favorite music in the privacy of their living room. OFA offers both in-person and remote classes in our Senior Exercise Program. Find out more at [dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise](http://dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise), or contact us by phone or email. Also, carefully consider an activity's time and location and how these fit with your current schedule. If participation adds stress to your life, reconsider your choice. Sometimes it takes a few tries to find the right activity for you.

**Keep It Up:** Don't let each new year be part of an annual cycle of unrealistic resolutions. Incremental

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## Resolutions (continued)

changes allow you enjoy each step toward fulfilling your resolutions. Behavior change is more than a once-a-year resolution; it is a lifetime's journey.

**Be clear:** Define your resolution as a plan that can be followed, not a vague idea without a path. Make it 'SMART': Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

**S is for Specific:** Instead of resolving to eat healthier or exercise more, say, for example, "I will eat at least three servings of fruits and vegetables a day," or "I will walk at least 30 minutes five days a week."

**M is for Measurable:** Use numbers so that you can measure progress toward your goal. For example: "I will replace at least two refined grain foods with a fruit, vegetable, or whole grain daily;" "I will go to the gym three days a week;" "I will sleep at least seven hours every night." Until you have successfully achieved your goals, write down and log your meals, exercise, or sleep time on paper or an app to track your progress.

**A is for Achievable:** Set a goal you can reasonably accomplish. If you rarely walk or can hardly run a mile, resolving to run a marathon may be unrealistic. Aiming to walk or run a 5K route by the end of the year may be more achievable.

**R is for Relevant:** Make sure each goal aligns with your values, lifestyle, and long-term goals. Time-bound: Give yourself a specific and realistic timeline, with intermediate timed goals along the way.

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*(Adapted from the Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter)*

## Easy Recipe: Veggie Loaded Chili (Serves 6)

- 1 lb lean ground turkey, beef, or chicken
- 1 Tbsp olive oil or other plant oil
- 2 large or 3 small garlic cloves, minced
  - ½ medium onion, diced
  - 1 small red bell pepper, diced
- 1 small zucchini or yellow squash, diced
  - 1 medium carrot, diced
  - 2 Tbsp chili powder
  - 1 Tbsp ground cumin
- 1 can (15 oz) puréed tomato or plain tomato sauce
  - ½ can water or broth
- 1 can (15 oz) crushed or petite diced tomatoes
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans or any other type of bean, rinsed and drained
  - 1 cup corn, frozen or canned/drained
  - Dash of cayenne pepper (optional)
    - Salt and pepper, to taste

*Optional toppings: Diced avocado, chopped cilantro, shredded cheese, plain Greek yogurt, and/or lime wedges*

### STEPS

1. In a large pot or soup kettle over medium heat add the oil. Once the oil is hot, add ground meat, garlic, onions, bell peppers, zucchini or yellow squash, and carrots, and sauté for 7-9 minutes or until meat is no longer pink.

2. Add seasonings, tomato sauce, water, crushed tomatoes, beans, and corn. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes or until carrots are tender.

## Dutchess County Office for the Aging

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