

# New Year's Resolutions

In 2003, commit to a lifestyle change, not to a list of unrealistic goals.

**Question:** I've not been able to lose the extra weight of my last pregnancy, five years ago. I feel unattractive and depressed. My New Year's resolutions for this have failed. What can I do?

**., New Bern, North Carolina**

**Answer:** If you want to make a New Year's resolution, don't waste time on fad diets and unrealistic exercise goals. Instead, commit yourself to a lifestyle change that has irrefutable scientific proof behind it.

The "Women's Health Initiative Study," conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, reported in 1999 a dramatic reduction in cardiovascular diseases that was attributed to down-to-earth lifestyle changes enacted by some of the participants. More than 16,000 female nurses participated.

Half of them continued with their typical American lifestyle. The other half kept the study's specific lifestyle changes. All of them attended regular medical checkups.

At the end of five years, the courageous lifestyle-changers were rewarded. Their incidence of heart attack, congestive heart failure, stroke and hypertension was 82 percent lower than that of the junk-food junkies! (Of course, men benefit equally from healthful lifestyle changes.)

The health of these nurses was improved dramatically through very reachable goals. They could not smoke or drink alcohol

(except in moderation—one glass of red wine with meals), and they had to stay in shape by eating a Mediterranean-style diet, exercising a half hour a day and maintaining a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25 percent. A BMI of 25 percent is quite forgiving—only 10-15 pounds over your ideal weight.

You'll look great, feel more energetic, and lower your risk of heart disease and cancer if you will begin to avoid processed and junk foods, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, increase your intake of nuts and olive oil, and eat fish instead of red meat. A Mediterranean-style diet resembles the one God gave the Jews in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

Still, it can be difficult to maintain a diet varied enough to obtain all the nutrients we need. Even the strictest vegetarians I know believe in supplementation. I recommend a natural-food supplement. Try to verify that the supplement you choose is derived from a plant source and is processed naturally.

I also strongly recommend adding fresh carrot juice to your diet. The anti-oxidizing power of carrots is second to none.

Carrot juice is to free radicals what RoboCop is to criminals—it stops them dead in their tracks!

Remember, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Don't contaminate it with junk food.

**Question:** I have been smoking for 15 years. Every New Year's Eve I promise to quit, but I just can't do it. Do you have any advice?

**M.T., Chicago, Illinois**

**Answer:** It's incredible to me how more than 1.5 million Americans die each year from heart disease and cancer. If only 30 percent of them are smokers, then that means cigarette companies lose almost 500,000 clients a year—and aren't even fazed by it. They just convince more people to smoke.

I won't try to "scare you straight." I think you already know your body is to be a temple for God. But my heart goes out to you because you have a very difficult chemical and emotional dependency.

I have seen in our addiction program at my hospital that people can kick heroin, cocaine and alcohol much more easily than they can quit cigarettes. I even have had patients with lung cancer tell me they will not be giving up their cigarettes. It's tough as nails to quit.

Medications and medicated patches can help with the craving. We also do detoxification therapy and have helped many people simply with good nutrition.

If you have tried everything, my advice is that you take this to God in prayer. He is the only one who can fill the space in your spirit and mind that you are currently filling with smoke.

Do you remember how Jesus had to cast out a demon because His disciples couldn't? When they asked Him why they failed, He told them it would come out only with prayer and fasting (see Mark 9:29). Likewise, that's the only way many people can quit smoking.

The Lord is always willing to help. If you really want to quit, God will deliver you.

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