

Food for Thought

January 2025

New Year Healthy Habits

Making small changes can bring big benefits to your health in the New Year! Invite your family and friends to join and support you as you get healthy in the coming year. Follow these tips to get started:



- **Start your day with a glass of water.** Drinking water first thing in the morning will hydrate you for the busy day ahead. Instead of drinking sugar filled drinks choose water throughout the day. If plain water isn't your favorite, add a squeeze of lemon, lime, or orange juice, or some cucumber or strawberry slices for extra flavor. Try your favorite fruits or vegetables as flavorings in your water.
- **Add more veggies to meals and snacks.** Add shredded carrots or summer squash to pasta sauce, keep cut-up vegetables like sweet peppers and celery in the refrigerator for everyone to snack on in-between meals. Stir canned pumpkin into oatmeal or pancake batter. Shredded cabbage will stretch your soup or stew farther and add lots of flavor and fiber. Come up with ways to include veggies in your favorite recipes.
- **Make physical activity part of your daily routine.** Take the stairs, vacuum the house, lift groceries, carry laundry baskets. Then, take your activity up a level and go for a daily walk (with or without the dog), get moving with a fitness video on YouTube or a virtual class, and play active games (indoors and outside) with the kids - make a scavenger hunt to find items in the house, look for a certain book, a fuzzy sock, or a wooden spoon. Look for outdoor items like a stop sign, the number 4 on a mailbox, or the tallest tree on the block.
- **Take a walk after dinner.** Don't just sit on the couch after dinner. Make time for a 10 minute walk. Walking after eating can be good for you while giving you an energy burst.
- **Get your zzzzzzz's.** Quality sleep, 7-8 hours each night, is important for good health and to have energy to think and move each day. Make a bedtime routine for your kids and for yourself. Try to go to bed at the same time each night, and to wake up at the same time each morning. Think of all the things you will be able to do when you feel rested and refreshed!
- **Make a SMART goal for yourself related to food.** SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time based. Here are some examples of **SMART** goals:
 - *"I will eat a piece of fruit for a snack 4 days out of the week for the next 2 weeks."*
 - *"I will try a new recipe with beans this week."*
 - *"I will fill half my plate with veggies at dinner 4 nights this week."*
 - *"I will drink 8 ounces of water with each meal this week."*
 - *"I will try 2 new whole grains this week, like barley and quinoa."*



Come up with your own goal that makes sense for you then start with that one change. Build on your success by adding new changes each week or as you master a new healthy habit. Make this year the healthiest one yet!

Sausage and Barley Soup

- 1 (6 oz.) package turkey breakfast sausage
- 2 ½ cups frozen bell peppers
- 2 cups water
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can Italian-styled stewed tomatoes
- ¼ cup uncooked, quick-cooking barley
- 1 cup coarsely chopped fresh, rinsed, baby spinach



1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Heat a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add sausage and cook 3 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 160°F on a food thermometer. Remove from heat.
3. Place frozen peppers and 2 cups water in a blender; process until smooth.
3. Add pepper puree, tomatoes, and barley to the sausage in the pan. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Stir in spinach; cook for 1 minute or until spinach wilts. Serve.
5. *Store in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to four days. Freeze for up to three months for best quality.*

Cookie Dough Dip

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 Tbsp. nut butter
- 1 Tbsp. maple syrup or honey
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp. mini chocolate chips



1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Mix all ingredients in a bowl and serve with apple slices.
3. Store in an airtight container for up to four days.

Eat Smart Idaho offers FREE classes & educational events that can help limited resource individuals & families learn how to eat well for less! Ask for Eat Smart Idaho in your County.

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai &
Shoshone Counties 208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, &
Nez Perce Counties 208-883-2267



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Sources: <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/eat-smart-blog/new-year-new-you/extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/eat-smart-blog/new-year-new-you/>;
<https://publications.extension.uconn.edu/2021/01/01/eat-smart-in-the-new-year/>; <https://thegrio.com/2025/01/01/25-tiny-changes-you-can-commit-to-for-a-healthier-new-year/>; <https://extension.illinois.edu/food/recipes> retrieved 01/02/25

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