

## 'Tis the season...

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It's the holiday season. The holiday season - the fun, food, and candy start in October, with Halloween. Larger than normal amounts of candy can be found in homes, shared with co-workers and left out on business counters. Soon after the candy has been devoured comes the Thanksgiving turkey and the fixings that go with it. Each family creates their favorite fixings, based on tradition or taste: green bean casserole, baked yams, stuffing - with or without sausage and raisins, to name a few. Let's not forget dessert: pumpkin, pecan, or apple pie. December - school parties, holiday festivities, Hanukkah, and Christmas - a few more reasons to taste a variety of pastries, candies, eggnog, or hot-cocoa. It is the holiday season! Just one more cookie, please?

As soon as December 25<sup>th</sup> has passed, it seems like we start right in talking about New Year's Resolutions. Walking down the street, you can hear what someone has planned for their resolution: quit smoking, lose weight, or exercise more - sometimes, all three. "I can't believe how much I've eaten in the last few weeks, time to cut back."

I no longer make New Year's Resolutions. However, I like to take the time and reflect where I am, thinking of all aspects of my life. Then I determine what steps I can take towards being a healthier person and staying physically active. Maybe I do make resolutions!



**Enjoy your food, but eat less.** This is the message the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be promoting January - April, 2012. This message is part of an approach aimed at improving America's health and reversing obesity and chronic diet-related diseases. Balancing calories, now this is an idea I can work with.

It can be easy to eat more than we should. I was at the grocery store the other day and overheard someone talking about the bag of 'cute little' bagels that were on display at the end of one of the aisles. What they didn't realize was that was the size of bagels years ago. Doing a little research can yield large amounts of information. Today's larger size plain bagel can have 260 calories or more. The 'cute little' bagel has 110 calories. The smaller size of the bagel also decreases the amount of butter, cream cheese, or other topping that can go on top of it - another reduction in calories.

The previous message from the USDA was ***make half your plate fruits and vegetables***. Combining the two messages - making half my plate fruits and vegetables and enjoy my food, but eat less, is a practical way towards making the frequently heard resolution, a reality.

My resolution - to continue what I started the end of this year. I schedule time to walk during the day.

*As I complete the writing of this article, an announcement was made about a new tool that has just become available at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov). It is called 'SuperTracker'.*

*'SuperTracker' is designed to assist individuals as they make changes in their life to maintain a healthy weight, therefore reducing a person's risk of chronic disease. This free, on-line tool can be used at any time. There are a variety of features one can choose from to support nutrition and physical activity goals.*

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