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## Resolution: 5 Tips to Healthier Eating in the New Year

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Is eating healthier one of your New Year's resolutions? Following a **fad diet**, or being overly restrictive, will not help you or your family achieve your health goals. Healthy eating does not mean boring, tasteless foods.

Try these simple yet sensible steps that will help you adopt a healthier diet, without feeling deprived.

1. **Fill the plate with colorful vegetables**

There are many more vegetables to try than just lettuce and tomatoes! Bright-colored and dark green leafy vegetables are especially loaded with vitamins and **antioxidants**. They are also high in fiber, which makes them very filling. In addition, they are low in calories – good to help trim waistline. When you fill up your stomach with veggies, they will be less likely to feel the urge to binge on other high-fat or processed foods.

2. **Snack on fruits - fresh or dried**

When feel like snacking, grab a fruit instead of chips or cookies. Like vegetables, fruits are high in antioxidants and **fiber** and low in calories. To make it fun, use **low-fat yogurt** as a dip. This way you'll get some **calcium** as well as **protein** – which helps feel full longer. And don't forget about dried fruits. Mixing them with **whole-wheat breakfast cereal** and **nuts** makes a nutritious school snack.

3. **Look for alternatives to processed meat**

Instead of always packing sodium-loaded **processed ham** sandwiches; try using leftover high-quality protein from the night before. How does a grilled fish burger, chicken breast sandwich, or soy-based vegetarian hot dog sound to you? These protein alternatives are usually nitrate-free, low in **saturated fat** and more heart health friendly

4. **Choose whole grains**

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating at least 3 servings of **whole grains** every day. Not only are they high in fiber, whole grains also containing an array of antioxidants not found in fruits and vegetables. The easiest way to increase whole grain intake is to replace some of your refined-grain products. For instance, use **whole-grain bread** instead of white bread when making lunch sandwiches. Substitute half the white flour with whole wheat flour in your regular recipes for cookies, muffins, and pancakes. Toss brown rice, wild rice, or barley in your vegetable soup. Or snack on popcorn instead of chips on family movie nights. (Yes, popcorn is a whole grain!) Don't forget, you don't need to completely wipe out all refined grains. You can always try serving half whole wheat/half refined as a starting point.

5. **Eat breakfast**

Many people often skip breakfast. Some skip it because they are too rushed in the morning and have little time to prepare. Some skip it as a measure to control weight. But studies have shown that people who eat breakfast regularly are more likely to control their weight than those who skip breakfast. An ideal breakfast contains at least 3 food groups. For instance, a bowl of whole wheat breakfast cereal with milk and blueberries can start your day the healthy way.

## *Healthy Recipe*

### Barley-Stuffed Peppers

Barley makes a healthy, fiber-rich substitute for ground meat in these delicious stuffed peppers.

#### Ingredients

1 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth  
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms  
2/3 cup quick-cooking barley  
2 large red, yellow, and/or green sweet peppers (about 1 pound)  
1 egg, beaten  
3/4 cup shredded reduced-fat mozzarella cheese (3 ounces)  
1 large tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped (about 3/4 cup)  
1/2 cup shredded zucchini  
1/3 cup soft bread crumbs  
1 tablespoon snipped fresh basil or 1/2 teaspoon dried basil, crushed  
1 teaspoon snipped fresh rosemary or 1/8 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed  
1/8 teaspoon onion salt  
Several dashes bottled hot pepper sauce  
Fresh rosemary (optional)  
Dried red chili peppers (optional)



#### Directions

1. In a medium saucepan combine the broth, mushrooms, and barley. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for 12 to 15 minutes or until barley is tender. Drain thoroughly.
2. Cut sweet peppers in half lengthwise; remove seeds and membranes. If desired, precook pepper halves in boiling water for 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels.
3. In a medium mixing bowl stir together the egg, 1/2 cup of the cheese, the tomato, zucchini, bread crumbs, basil, rosemary, onion salt, and bottled hot pepper sauce. Stir in cooked barley mixture. Place peppers, cut side up, in a 2-quart rectangular baking dish. Spoon barley mixture into the pepper halves.
4. Bake stuffed peppers, covered, in a 350 degree oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until filling is heated through. Sprinkle remaining cheese over the peppers. Return to oven; bake 2 minutes more. Carefully transfer peppers to a serving platter. If desired, garnish with fresh rosemary and dried red chili peppers. Makes 4 servings.

#### Nutrition Facts

Calories 195, Total Fat (g) 5, Saturated Fat (g) 2, Cholesterol (mg) 62, Sodium (mg) 364, Carbohydrate (g) 28, Fiber (g) 5, Protein (g) 12, Vitamin C (DV%) 213, Calcium (DV%) 17, Iron (DV%) 8, Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet