

January 2026



HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Smart Goals for Nutrition: Rethinking the “New Year, New You” Approach

As the holiday season winds down, it’s common to feel motivated to “reset” in January. Between gatherings, treats, and changes in routine, the new year can feel like the perfect time to make a fresh start.

And to be clear—there’s nothing wrong with wanting to improve your health at any time of year. In fact, this motivation has a name: the fresh-start effect, when a time-based milestone (like January 1st) inspires us to make changes.

But if you’ve ever set a strict New Year’s resolution and felt it fade by the end of the month... you’re not alone—and it’s not because you “failed.” Often, the goal itself is the problem.

This post will help you rethink diet-focused resolutions and replace them with smart goals for nutrition that feel realistic, flexible, and sustainable.

Time-Saving Strategies

When time is short, a few simple strategies can help you stay nourished without spending hours in the kitchen. Embracing a semi-homemade approach is one of the easiest ways to reduce stress. Using high-quality prepped ingredients can still provide that homemade feel without the overwhelm. A rotisserie chicken, for example, can be shredded for tacos, soups, or lettuce wraps. Frozen pizza dough can be customized with your favorite toppings for a quick family meal. Even pre-chopped vegetables are a time-saver—perfect for roasting, stir-fries, or salads. These shortcuts aren’t about cutting corners; they’re about directing your energy where it matters most.

Another helpful strategy is to cook once, eat twice. Preparing versatile ingredients in bulk makes mealtime easier all week long. Cooking a pot of rice or quinoa at the start of the week can form the base for different meals such as grain bowls or a lentil quinoa dill salad. Hard-boiled eggs can be prepared in batches and used for quick snacks or as a protein addition to salads and sandwiches.

Why We Should Rethink Diet-Focused New Year's Resolutions

Research suggests that many people abandon New Year's resolutions before the end of January. The issue usually isn't motivation—it's that resolutions tend to be:

- Too ambitious
- Too rigid
- Framed negatively
- Built around perfection (instead of real life)
- Attempted without support

And when goals are unrealistic, they often lead to a cycle of frustration: "I fell off... so I may as well quit." That all-or-nothing mindset can create guilt, shame, and even more stress around food.

Also, a quick reminder: there's no physiological reason you have to wait for a certain date to take a step toward better health. You can start with one small shift at your very next meal.

Why We Should Rethink Diet-Focused New Year's Resolutions

Small changes—done consistently—are what create lasting habits. Here are a few research-backed strategies for setting goals that are more likely to stick.

1) Have more flexible goals

People who approach goals with flexibility tend to report better well-being over time. Flexibility means you can adjust when life happens, rather than feeling like you "failed."

A flexible mindset sounds like:

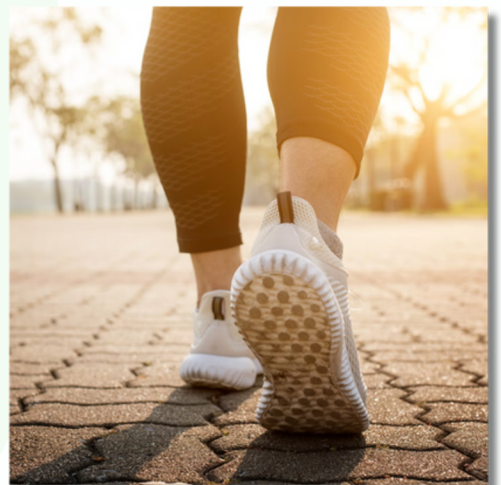
- "This week got busy—what's the smallest version of this goal I can still do?"
- "If I missed a day, I can restart tomorrow without punishing myself."

2) Be flexible in how you reach your goals

You don't need a perfect plan. In fact, being overly rigid can backfire. If a goal only works when life is calm and predictable, it won't last long.

Instead of one "right" path, consider:

- Several breakfast options you enjoy
- A backup plan for busy days
- Multiple ways to move your body that feel good



3) Focus on positive outcomes (not fear or avoidance)

Goals framed around what you want to feel or gain tend to work better than goals framed around what you want to avoid.

Examples:

- “I want more energy in the afternoon”
- “I want to feel more satisfied after meals”
- “I want to feel stronger and more capable”

4) Enlist support

Support matters. Whether it’s a friend, family member, or a professional (like a dietitian), goals are easier to reach when you don’t feel like you’re doing it alone.

Examples of Smart Goals for Nutrition

Here are a few small, realistic goals that can build momentum without requiring a total lifestyle overhaul.

Snack smarter (most days)

Pick 3-4 days this week to plan a snack that helps you feel satisfied—something with fiber + protein or healthy fat.

Ideas:

- Fruit + peanut butter
- Crackers + cheese
- Yogurt + berries
- Trail mix
- Turkey roll-ups + fruit

Choose water a couple times a day

Not “only water.” Just adding a couple intentional water moments—like one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon—can be a helpful starting point.



Practice mindful eating once a day

Pick one meal or snack where you:

- Sit down (even if it's quick)
- Put your phone away
- Slow down and take a few breaths first
- Notice taste, texture, and fullness cues



Be kind to yourself

Your worth is not tied to a resolution. Progress isn't linear. And taking care of yourself includes how you speak to yourself when things don't go perfectly.

A supportive goal could be:

- "When I notice all-or-nothing thinking, I'll practice a more neutral reset."

Final Thoughts

If New Year's resolutions haven't worked for you in the past, it doesn't mean you're the problem. Many resolutions are set up to fail because they're rigid, unrealistic, and rooted in perfection.

This year, consider a different approach: choose smart goals for nutrition that are flexible, positive, and built for real life. Small steps count—and they add up.

If you'd like support creating goals that fit your schedule, preferences, and health needs, we would love to help.

👉 Reach out to scheduling to work with our registered dietitians Melissa and Jessica, and/or join our online classes!

References

1. Oscarsson, M., et al. (2020). A large-scale experiment on New Year's resolutions... PLoS One.
2. Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health (2019). Re-thinking your New Year's resolutions.
3. Dickson, J. M., et al. (2021). Self-Regulatory Goal Motivational Processes... IJERPH.
4. Pychyl, T. (2009). Does goal type matter? Psychology Today.
5. Canadian Mental Health Association (2022). Rethinking your New Year's resolutions.
6. National Eating Disorders Association. Resolutions that will actually make you feel good.

Ask the Dietitian

Q: If I don't set a strict resolution, how will I stay motivated?

A: Motivation doesn't come from being strict—it comes from feeling capable and supported. Small, realistic goals build confidence, and confidence fuels motivation. When goals fit your life, you're more likely to keep going.

Have a nutrition question you'd like answered in a future newsletter?

👉 **Send your questions to jessicajantz@clayplattefamily.com**

New! Monthly Online Diabetes Support Group

We're excited to announce the launch of our online Diabetes Support Group, designed to provide education, encouragement, and connection in a supportive, judgment-free space.

Each month, we'll focus on one key topic related to diabetes care and daily life—keeping things simple, practical, and realistic. These sessions are conversation-based and led by our dietitian team, with time for questions and shared experiences.

January 12 – Diabetes Foundations & Refresh

Start the year with a supportive conversation focused on:

- Reconnecting with the basics of diabetes care
- Identifying what's already working for you
- Choosing small, realistic goals for the year ahead

Whether you're newly diagnosed or just looking for a reset, this session is a great place to start.

What to Expect Each Month

- One focused topic
- Practical, real-life strategies
- Open discussion and encouragement
- A supportive community—you're not alone



Date: January 12



Format: Online

👉 How to join: [Monthly Diabetes Support Group \(ongoing\)](#) | [Meeting-Join](#) | [Microsoft Teams](#)



2026 HEALTHY LIVING ONLINE NUTRITION AND DIABETES CLASSES

Join us for our **Complimentary**
Nutrition Group Classes and
New Monthly Diabetes Online Support Group!

Class Topics Include:

Diabetes Prevention

Heart Health

Mindful Eating

New *Menopause Nutrition*

Fight Inflammation: The Power of Food

**Monthly Diabetes Support Group on variety of
topics beginning in January! Scan QR Code for
further details.**

Where: Comfort of Your Own Home

When: Mondays from 5-6pm

With Who: Jessica Jantz, RDN, CDCES

**Register with QR Code or with
Scheduling!**



Thank you for reading our Healthy Living newsletter!



Melissa White, MS, RD, LD, CDCDES



Jessica Jantz, RDN, CDCES