

Preparation Can Help You Re-Commit to Your New Years Resolutions

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DENVER — Research shows that nearly half of all American adults make New Year's resolutions each year, but by February nearly one-third of them have broken them. Among the top new years resolutions are resolutions about weight loss, exercise, and quitting tobacco.

"One of the biggest reasons people relapse in their tobacco cessation or weight management efforts is because they attempt to change without a plan," said National Jewish Health Assistant Professor of Medicine Heather LaChance, PhD, an addition expert. "Most people try to wing it, without a specific plan to cope with the inevitable ups and downs of dieting and quitting tobacco."

Dr. LaChance offers advice about how to re-commit yourself to your resolutions and stick with it this time to shed those extra pounds or tobacco habit.

Write down all the high-risk situations for relapse. That means the people, events or places most likely to make you feel like overeating or smoking. It could be your habit of lighting a cigarette when you first sit down to your desk or while driving in your car. Or it could be the birthday party at work or your favorite restaurant where they serve delicious, but fattening, nachos. Then develop strategies for dealing with those situations.

Get a buddy. Lasting change is difficult, so it's good to get help, and not go it alone. Find a friend, group, program, or therapist who can provide more support, structure, consistency or new strategies. Examples are a workout friend, the Colorado Tobacco Quitline, Weight Watchers, an online support program, or BreakFree (National Jewish Health's smoking cessation program available to the community through the National Jewish Health website).

Use a calendar. Mark off one behavioral goal each day. Whether it's walking more, going to the gym, cutting back on 2-3 cigarettes per day, or eliminating candy bars as snack. If you mark it off on your calendar, you'll be more likely to stay on track. Seeing small accomplishments over the weeks can be encouraging!

Get information each day. Try to find a new book or online resource to provide you with some fresh ideas on how to make the changes you are trying to achieve. We all can get stuck or stale doing the same things. Reading a little each day on your goal can give you new techniques, more motivation and help you stay on track!

Don't beat yourself up. Research shows that the people who successfully quit a behavior are the ones who make *many* attempts to change, not just a single attempt. It is best to keep on quitting rather than give up altogether!

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 123 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the media resources page.

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