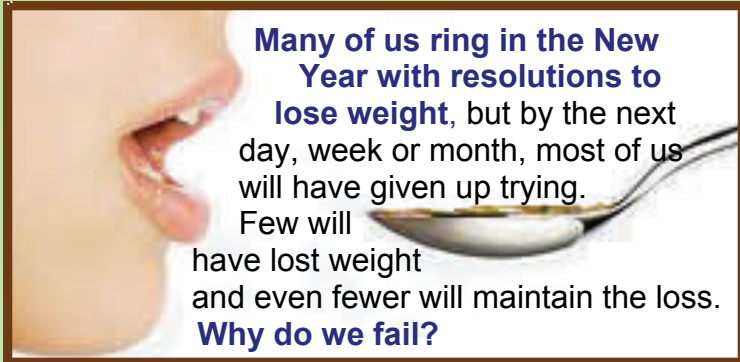




# Ring in the New Year With Spoonfuls of Health



**Many of us ring in the New Year with resolutions to lose weight**, but by the next day, week or month, most of us will have given up trying. Few will have lost weight and even fewer will maintain the loss. **Why do we fail?**

**Maybe it is because we sometimes focus on the wrong things.** If we are only concerned about weight loss, we are discouraged every time the scale doesn't go down, or even worse, goes up. Chalk-up another failure! Short-term goals, like looking good for our 10th reunion, are just that. Short-sighted. To succeed, we need to change for **ourselves**, focusing on improved health a spoonful at a time.

**Focusing on our health gives us benefits right away.** Small changes make us feel better and give our bodies and minds a boost. If weight loss occurs as a result of our efforts, that's a bonus. The future belongs to a healthier you!

**Improve eating habits.** Keep track of your food intake for 3 days, recording the time, every bite and sip that crosses your lips. Who were you with (friends, family, alone)? It's for your eyes only, so don't change a thing. After 3 days, take a look. Are there any patterns in your choices? Once you have an idea of what could be "better", set some goals for improvement.

**Increase physical activity.** Prioritize physical activity by planning for it. Otherwise, it gets pushed out by other pressing matters. Physical activity does not necessarily mean a couple of hours at the gym. It could be as simple as brisk walking, playing with your kids or dog, shoveling snow or even vigorous house cleaning. Thirty minutes adds up quickly once you focus on movement! So, **Make Your Move!**

**Take time for yourself.** An area we tend to neglect is planning daily quiet time to unwind. Research shows that if we take time to consciously relax, we cope better with stress. Our blood pressure goes down, and the "fight or flight" response (triggered when we face challenges) calms down. Being in a better state of mind improves our health.

Small Steps : Quicker Results	
<b>Quantify</b>	Instead of promising yourself, "I will eat less",  Set <i>specific</i> limits for yourself such as eating only 4 pieces of chocolate/week, or switching from 2% to 1% milk.
<b>One Change at a Time</b>	To succeed, focus on one issue at a time.  Start with something easy, like "no TV at meal-time".  One success motivates us to tackle another.
<b>Be realistic</b>	Try to clarify your goals: Instead of "daily exercise" say squeeze in a walk on your break, or "use the stairs". Plan longer sessions for weekends.

**The rewards? Feel better, have more energy and increased self-esteem.** It's good to know that we are "doing our body good!"

