



# A Fresh Year Has Started!

by HELLEN C. GREENBLATT, PhD

**When people** start a new year, they often hope: a fresh year, a fresh start. The problem is that too many people start out with unreasonable resolutions which are mostly broken within a few weeks of the start of the New Year.

So why not do something different, and just focus on one resolution for the first six months, be specific about what change you will make.

Select and then Plan: For example, resolve that you will start becoming more physically active.

- Pick a date and time that you will start.
- Then plan as to what you will do at that time.
- Write the goal on a sheet of paper used for this purpose only.
- List the days of the week that you will work on the change.
- Check off each day as you replicate your successes.

For example: "On Friday morning at 6.00am I will walk to the bus at a brisk pace, and for 60-90 seconds at a time I will walk as fast as I can. I will repeat this every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday."

Your sheet will list these three days, and their dates. Each day you carry out this commitment to yourself, you will check the date off.

**Reward Yourself:** Every week you have successfully completed your goal, recognize that you did it! Put a gold star on the calendar at the end of the week, or tell yourself in the mirror that you did "good". Also telling a friend that would be pleased for you is another motivator. Another great reward is taking a much-deserved 15 minutes for yourself doing something YOU want to do.

**Be Prepared:** It is easier to set goals and succeed when you are feeling great about yourself and life. However, too many people are "stressed-out" by their daily responsibilities (Brain, Behavior, and Immunity 2008 23:217). Stress promotes excessive immune inflammation which results in illness. Therefore, to optimize one's quality of life and health, an individual needs to be in immune homeostasis (balance).

**Achieve and Maintain Immune Homeostasis (Balance):** Immune inflammation helps defend the body against microorganisms, and helps it heal when injured. However, a person may have inappropriate levels of inflammation. For example, allergies, or conditions such as prostatitis, fibromyalgia, or chronic disease syndrome may be caused by excessive amounts of inflammation. Additionally, autoimmune conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, lupus, multiple sclerosis, and inflammatory bowel disease are found in individuals with "run-away" inflammation.

**Fat cells:** Fat cells are immune cells which are little hotbeds of inflammation. As they pump out inflammatory molecules, other cells in the immune system release anti-inflammatory immune factors to counteract the inflammation contributed by the fat cells. Inflammation produced by the fat cells around the belly (abdominal fat) appears to be especially dangerous to one's health because it is a reflection of the amount of internal visceral fat that envelopes the organs.

**Exercise:** Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce inflammation in the body (J Appl Physiol 2005 98:1154), since every time a muscle contracts it releases powerful anti-inflammatory immune molecules to help the body reduce low-grade inflammation.

**Limit Intake of Empty Calories:** Foods with "empty" calories have little nutrition, but a high number of calories.

**White Flour:** Highly processed, white flour lacks important nutrients. The body breaks white flour products into glucose easily, which adds to the size of fat cells. Try to limit the amount of white bread, pasta, macaroni pies, and sweets that you consume.

**White Rice:** White rice is brown rice that has been stripped of many of its nutrients. Try to substitute brown rice for white rice, or at least eat smaller portions of the white rice.

**Fried Foods:** Deep-fried foods like French fries, fried chicken, potato and corn chips, are examples of high calorie "foods" with minimal nutritional value.

**Low Fat vs. High Fat:** Do not make the mistake thinking that low fat foods are better than "full" fat products, focus instead on the number of calories. Manufacturers increase the sugar content in "low-fat" foods to make them more palatable.

**Instead:** Put more vegetables and fruits on your plate. Focus on those with high levels of anthocyanins: the blue, purple, red pigments found in berries. The more colorful a fruit or vegetable, the healthier it is for you. In addition, lentils, beans, and unsalted nuts [salt is not recommended for those with high blood pressure] are a healthful, lower-calorie way of adding nutritional diversity.

**Avoid Drinking Empty Calories:**

**Soda:** To help reduce the size (and maybe even the numbers) of fat cells, limit the number of regular or diet sodas you consume. The body cannot tell the difference between diet soda and regular soda. Sweet is sweet to the body and mind.

**Mauby:** A mauby may be 140 or more calories (depending on how much sugar you put in). If you eliminated two maubys every day, you would save 28 lbs a year! Try to limit the number of mauby you drink every day or dilute it up more, and use less sugar.

**Portion Control:** Remember you can eat anything you want, just be conscious of the size of the portion. Make it a habit to eat smaller portions and the inches will come off.

**Incorporate Hyperimmune egg:** Hyperimmune egg contains a special cocktail of immune factors that help the body balance its immune inflammatory responses.

A person in immune homeostasis experiences less stress and fatigue, and heals and recovers more rapidly. Along with exercise and diet, incorporating hyperimmune egg into your diet will result in dramatic quality of life changes.

Every year you have promise yourself that this is the year you will take control of your life. It is time to follow through and take personal responsibility for your physical and emotional health (and help those you care about, to do the same). Using the steps outlined above will help you on your journey—consider them seriously.