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Make sure your healthy New Year's resolutions last

The New Year often brings with it a promise of healthy resolutions, but sometimes plans of shifting excess weight, exercising regularly or making healthy improvements to diet become difficult to maintain.

Experts at South Western Sydney Local Health District are encouraging people who may be finding it tricky sticking to health goals, to make small changes first.

Healthy Weight Manager at South West Sydney Local Health District's Health Promotion, Danielle Weber, said people shouldn't give up.

"Trying to make a lot of changes all at once is really hard," she said.

"Make smaller changes that you can incorporate into your usual routine, and build on them.

"There are a lot of fad diets out there that come and go and some of them can be bad for your health because you miss out on vital nutrients. You don't want to be on a diet; you want to make a permanent, healthy change that you can maintain.

"Little changes now will add up in the long run and can prevent diseases like diabetes, cancer and heart disease," Ms Weber said.

Some of Ms Weber's top tips for improving health include:

Food:

- Consider your portion sizes. "People tend to fill up larger plates, so put your meals on a smaller plate instead."
- Swap soft drinks for water.
- Fill up on vegetables and fruit rather than fried food.
- Put a lot of coloured vegetables on your plate: "colour is good because it gives a variety of vitamins and minerals, plus it's more appetising and appealing to eat!"

Exercise:

- Walking the dog for a longer period: "Try to increase your daily walk by five minutes each day and set yourself weekly goals."
- Turn the TV off: "go outside with the kids and fly a kite, or take a walk after dinner instead of reaching for the remote."
- Take the stairs instead of the lift at work, and "rather than emailing someone, get up and tell them the message."

Ms Weber said having company helps with motivation. "It can be easier for everyone to make an effort as a family or with a friend to help keep you on track. You could find a walking buddy, or swap a healthy recipe with a colleague," Ms Weber said.

If you would like more information on the Australian Dietary guidelines, serving sizes, and ways to improve your health, you can visit these websites:

Get Healthy: <http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au/program>

Dietary Guidelines: <http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials>

Swap It, Don't Stop it: www.swapit.gov.au

****MEDIA:** A video complementing this release, featuring Ms Weber, is available to be shared on your websites or social media channels at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QJRfM7HbCY>******