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Some Advice on Improving Your Eating Habits: Make Small Changes Over Time

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Make small changes over time and you can develop long-lasting eating and exercise habits during National Nutrition Month, which is March — and you could lose some weight and be healthier before summer.

“We live in a society that wants everything now,” said Marcia Pessolano, a registered dietitian nutritionist at the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

“The truth is, nutrition is no different than anything else. If you want to live a long and healthy life, you have to work at it each day and practice healthy habits.”

Research shows that *if you focus on one habit at a time for 2 to 4 weeks you are more likely to be*

successful. Slow and steady wins the race.

The state Department of Public Health recommends these other ideas to help you get on track:

- **Eat slowly:** It takes 20 minutes for your brain to realize you are full, so put your fork down in between bites. Take 20-30 chews per bite and turn off electronics. Instead, enjoy your meal with your family and friends.
- **Portion Control:** Use a nine-inch plate and fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. The other half should consist of about one-quarter whole grains and one-quarter lean protein.
- **Stay Consistent:** Consistency is key! Focus on eating healthy (e.g. whole grains, vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and low fat dairy) most of the time, but don't deprive yourself completely. Enjoy your favorite foods within reason.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Become more aware of your daily routines, habits, and behaviors. Start a journal to help you identify what you are doing well and what you can improve. Take your time and enjoy your food. Savor each bite and eat free of distractions (e.g. television, cell phones, etc.).

The Department of Public Health has [more information about nutrition](#), and the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) has more information about National Nutrition Month.