

# Lifestyle Health Program Newsletter

January | 2023

## Living Well with Chronic Disease FREE workshops!

Living Well With Chronic Disease (virtual through Teams)

When: Thursdays, February 9th-March 16th

Time: 5:30-7:30pm

This 6-session program helps us discover practical skills and 'tools' to help manage chronic symptoms (will focus on nutrition, physical activity, goal setting, and problem solving).

Register for [Living well with Chronic Disease](#) **HERE**



## Happy Healthy 2023!

### Why resolutions don't work, and what to try instead.

**It's that time of year. When many people set resolutions for the new year. The science says that about 85% of people who make New Year's resolutions will drop them by the end of January.**

**Dismal statistics.** So...let's talk about why they don't work, and what we can try instead.

1.

**Most resolutions are based on the premise of deprivation and rely too much on willpower.** *Example: I'm going to give up sugar. I'm going to the gym every day.*

Willpower is a finite resource and it's highly impacted by your external environment and your internal climate. We often start out strong, and by the end of the day, we are tired and dealing with decision fatigue. Deprivation is the *worst* way to approach habit change because our brains are wired to avoid pain and seek pleasure. You may be able to do it for a little while but you're most likely going to lose that battle. Our brains are wired for reward. The best way to get our brains on-board with healthy changes long-term is to present the healthy choices as a form of a reward.

2.

**Our resolutions are often too big.** *Example: I want to run a marathon. I want to lose 50 pounds.*

Start small and be specific. Instead of making big resolutions, try to make small shifts in your behaviors to create new habits. For instance, if you're trying to cut down on sugar in your diet, maybe your first baby step is: I'm going to cut from three teaspoons of sugar in my coffee every morning to two. And that's your first commitment to yourself. That's perfect, specific and small. Not to mention it's totally doable without deprivation or willpower. And after seven days when you've done two teaspoons of sugar instead of three, that's a huge win! And then you can take another baby step to build on that. And that's how you start building new, healthier habits. You create small wins for yourself and do it in a way that sets you up for success. And then you build.

3.

**Your environment plays a bigger role than you think.** Sometimes those around us don't want us to change because that means that their world also changes. This can be tough if you've decided to cut out sugar but your

partner fills the cupboards with cookies or brings ice cream home on the daily. Or if you've identified that certain foods "trigger" over-eating, and these foods are constantly around you. The breakroom is filled with chips, donuts and sweet treats. Or if you'd like to exercise after work during the week, but your colleagues continuously schedule late meetings. Since it's not always possible to switch to a new environment, if you have a goal that's in direct conflict with your surroundings, you may need to make some sacrifices to make it work, or potentially modify your goal. For example, maybe your partner can store sweets at a location that isn't as accessible, or you can avoid the breakroom table and take a walk with colleagues instead? Or perhaps you compromise to be open to late meetings on Wednesdays and Thursdays, but not the other evenings? This can be a tough hurdle, but once you understand the influence your environment has on fulfilling your goals, you'll be in a better position to develop a creative plan to move you forward. To learn more about this topic, and how to use "choice architecture" to design and develop healthy habits, check out this [article by James Clear, best-selling author of Atomic Habits.](#)

4.

**Should I count calories or listen to my body?** Structure or freedom? The truth is that both are required to be successful, and it's a delicate balance. If you have too much structure and rigidity, it can feel like deprivation. If we go too far the other direction, you may eat whatever you feel like, without having healthy options available. What does it look like when you have too much structure or too much freedom in your eating habits? This may be a little different for everyone, but here are some clues to help you know when you might be out of balance.

**Too Much Structure.** Too much structure may look like becoming obsessed with counting calories or counting points; planning every morsel of food you eat; or constantly weighing your food or yourself. This excessive structure may leave you feeling deprived. For some people, rigid meal plans feel incredibly hard. We feel like we're constantly focusing on all of the things we *can't* have. And this may lead to "rebellious" and going too far the other way. We may binge and sabotage ourselves and end up feeling angry and frustrated. It was too much structure. For others, it can be very helpful to have lists of specific meals and food combinations to fall back on. If you're feeling like you may have too much structure right now, think about how you can embrace a little freedom around your relationship with food. Where can you relax a little bit?

**Too Much Freedom.** If we have too much freedom around food, then we may not be planning ahead at all. We're just eating whatever we feel like, whenever we feel like it. We may be using food to manage our emotions and we may not be aware of how much we're eating or what we're putting in our mouths. Too much freedom may lead to us hurting our bodies, compromising our health, taking ourselves further away from our goals and again feeling angry and frustrated with ourselves. If you're struggling with too much freedom right now, consider where you might invite a little bit of structure to balance things out.

5.

**Self compassion as the foundation.** Be kind to yourself as you work on changing your diet/activity habits. A powerful way to do this involves getting rid of the words, "all of the time", and replacing with "most of the time". Such as, *most of the time* I will try to make healthy eating choices that nourish my body. And sometimes, I will give myself permission to eat things that provide pleasure, even if they aren't the healthiest foods.

**It's time to decide that you are done with the old way of trying to create healthy habits. No more deprivation, no more relying on willpower, no more beating yourself up for failing!**

You do want to make behavior change. You do want to create new healthier habits. You do want to lean into a new lifestyle that is going to fuel the person you want to become. You want to be healthy. You want to have energy. You want to live a long, healthy, vibrant life. And to do that, you do have to change some of your behaviors, and **we are here to help support you every baby step of the way.**

## Virtual Nutrition Classes

*(live virtual, offered through MS Teams)*

*with Sarah Morales, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist*



## Start 2023 Strong: Meal-Plan like a Pro!

Wednesday, January 25th  
5:30pm

### Learn about:

- Resources and Tips to get you started!
- 10 easy meals in minutes
- Templates, Tools and Apps
- Group discussion

Register Here!



## Mediterranean Diet Update

Wednesday, February 15th  
5:30pm

### Learn about:

- History, science, & global perspective
- What are the health benefits?
- 10 Mediterranean foods you gotta have
- Sample meal plans, tips, tools

Register Here!

Need help or accountability with food/nutrition? Email [Sarah](#) to schedule a nutrition session.

## Fitness Updates



### Join our January Accountability Group!!

Do you want to start an exercise plan but need a little added accountability? Join our January Exercise Accountability Group for weekly email reminders, inspiration, and accountability with sticking to your exercise resolution.

You can create your own exercise goal or ask for help coming up with one!

Register [HERE](#)

### Sign up for January Fitness and Yoga Series!

- **Fitness classes:** January's theme: **Reflect, Reset, Renew for the New Year!** Reflect back on success, achievements, discipline and action. Reset with reasonable goals. And

Renew yourself & your routine! In person and online fitness options available, every Monday and Wednesday at 430pm.

- **If you want to attend January fitness classes on Teams you need to register [here](#)!**
- Morning classes are being moved to *in person only* and will be onsite at the PSD South Transportation Terminal (6425 Portner Road) on Tuesdays at 10am and onsite at the PSD North Transportation Terminal (2445 Laporte Ave Building H) on Wednesdays at 11am. Everyone welcome to attend, not only those that are employed onsite. Email Mira for more information!
- **Yoga classes on Teams:** Join us in January for our **Reflect, Reset, Renew for the New Year** series. Tuesday 530pm, Thursday 430pm. **Register [here](#) for December yoga invites!**
- Email Mira if you have any questions about registering for November classes and would like the Teams invites or have any questions about in person classes.

### How is your fitness journey going so far this year?

- Need accountability or motivation? Email [Mira](#) to schedule a Fitness Assessment!



#### **Fitness Class Schedule**

**Monday** 4:30-5:15pm

**Wednesday** 4:30-5:15pm

Fitness classes are virtual and in person.

**E-mail Mira** for the virtual class link.

#### **Yoga Class Schedule**

**Tuesday** 5:30-6:30pm

**Thursday** 4:30-5:15pm

Yoga classes are virtual only. **E-mail**

**Mira** for the virtual class link.

## Contact Information

### UCHealth Lifestyle Health Program

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