Three Easy New Year’s Resolutions All Diabetics Can Make

by AFRA WILLMORE

Making New Year's Resolutions for Diabetes

How often do you revisit your diet management of your type 2 diabetes? Do you find that your good intentions slide into bad habits and find your blood sugars suffering as a result? Why not join me in making some New Year's resolutions that will help make you healthier now and in the long term.

Generally, I make New Year's resolutions around managing my type 2 diabetes right after my regular HbA1c blood tests which show I am not always being as rigorous as I ought to be – mainly due to my obsessive love of cake.

I leave the doctor's office full of remorse, determined to pull the reins on my worst habits and hopeful of a better report three months later when the blood test is repeated.

But it is a New Year, and so I thought I would take the opportunity to make some more New Year's resolutions in the hope that they will inspire, or at least entertain you. Hopefully telling you will inspire me to actually stick to my promises to myself too!

Eliminating Sugary Drinks

Firstly, I will not be tempted by the "full fat" version of my favourite soda. I can practically feel the teaspoons of sugar fizzing round my veins and always feel ridiculously guilty after drinking it.

I find myself making excuses to myself. It was the only non-alcoholic drink my host had to offer. I needed a pick me up after a busy day. I wasn't quick enough to tell my waiter I wanted a diet drink. Or it's embarrassing ordering a diet drink with a burger and fries!

Mostly the truth is that sometimes I just crave the taste, which, I'm sorry, no so-called diet/sugar-free/lite version can ever really match in my opinion.

In fact, scratch that – I will avoid soda altogether. It makes me bloat and, let's face it, it's not exactly healthy. My skin, hair and nails will thank me if I switch to water and my immune system will benefit if I choose fruit juices occasionally instead of fizz too.

Saying 'Goodbye' to Unhealthy Snacks

Cake. A big sugary sticking point for me, along with cookies and chips. Now this is hard for me. Part of my job as professional blogger often involves reviewing products and canny PR people often pop in sweet treats along with the product they would like me to write about.

Take today for instance – reviewing a techy gadget but it came in a box with cookies, cakes, chocolates and a

gorgeous tin of hot chocolate powder. A lovely hamper, or as I like to call it, a 'diabetic coma in a basket.'

I must resist – or at least choose a smaller slice at the coffee morning or meeting. And give up my terrible habit of grabbing a packet of cookies to munch through with a cuppa while I am hard at work on my laptop.

Taking a break and making a sandwich will be better for my eyesight, waistline and blood sugar levels. I'll just avert my eyes from the basket of chips I keep on top of the freezer out of easy reach of the children but not too difficult for me to reach when carb cravings strike.

Moderation

Eating out is a nightmare for a diabetic with little or no willpower. I really have no excuses for the unhealthy choices I make as almost all restaurants and cafes offer low fat, high fibre or low salt options. Yes I prefer fries to salad but for the sake of my long term health I must learn to choose wisely.

Because that's the big issue isn't it? Right now in my 40s I can get away with being naughty with my food choices occasionally. Sitting in the diabetic clinic waiting room at the hospital along with much older people with walking sticks and glasses and bandaged legs makes me feel positively sprightly.

I cannot imagine my diabetes ever causing me problems because apart from slightly raised blood pressure, and so far it hasn't.

Conclusion

When I was first diagnosed eight years ago I panicked and bought diabetic chocolates, jam and other specialist products. My diabetic specialist soon put me straight – she told me nothing is banned in a diabetic diet within reasonable limits, but the trouble is those limits stretch for me too often as I get complacent.

The bald truth is that being diabetic puts you (and me) at higher risk of suffering a stroke, heart problems, sight issues, circulation problems and even amputation. There is more you could worry about, but you get the picture.

But this is not some unavoidable fate and this is what I should tell myself when tempted. So in a nutshell my New Year's resolution is to think ahead, value my future health, and make sure the tempting treats are exactly that - an occasional treat.