

## **USDA Launches New Online Nutrition SuperTracker in Time for Those Healthy New Year Resolutions**

The slate is clean. The New Year has begun and millions of Americans are making promises to themselves to lose weight. Every January the ritual begins with resolutions to get in shape. Webster's dictionary defines resolution as a "decision as to future action." This year I challenge you to make the future NOW and get serious about your health. I am not talking about massive weight loss, modest amounts such as 5-10% of your total body weight, is likely to improve your blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugars.

Just in time to help Americans keep their New Year's resolutions, USDA has released a new web tool, the *SuperTracker*, available at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov). The *SuperTracker* is a visually appealing, comprehensive, state-of-the-art resource, designed to assist individuals as they make lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of chronic disease and maintain a healthy weight. Release of this new web tool comes as USDA highlights the second in a series of themed consumer messages supporting the MyPlate icon – *Enjoy Your Food, But Eat Less*. USDA is promoting the message over the next three months in conjunction with more than 5,000 organizations participating in the MyPlate Nutrition Communicators Network.

"Overcoming the health and nutrition challenges we face as a nation is critical and the *SuperTracker* provides consumers with an assortment of tools to do just that," said

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "This easy-to-use website will help Americans at all stages of life improve their overall health and well-being as they input dietary and physical activity choices into the tool. During the holiday season we are surrounded by good food and this is a perfect time to *Enjoy Your Food, But Eat Less*."

Consumers can access this free, on-line tool at anytime and can choose a variety of features to support nutrition and physical activity goals. *SuperTracker* offers consumers the ability to:

- Personalize recommendations for what and how much to eat and amount of physical activity.
- Track foods and physical activity from an expanded database of foods and physical activities. Customize features such as goal setting, virtual coaching, weight tracking and journaling.
- Measure progress with comprehensive reports ranging from a simple meal summary to in-depth analysis of food groups and nutrient intake over time.
- Operationalize the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines.
- Support family and friends by adding their individual profiles.

The *SuperTracker* complements First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* Initiative and provides practical information to help individuals, health professionals, nutrition educators, and consumers build healthier diets. As Americans are experiencing epidemic rates of overweight and obesity, the online resources and tools available at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) can empower people to make healthier food and physical activity choices for themselves, their families and their children.

For more information about the Frederick County Extension Office and bi-weekly articles that we send to the Frederick News-Post check out our website <http://Frederick.umd.edu/> Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, LDN, is a licensed Registered Dietitian and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.