

# Toss diets in trash, experts urge

BY MICHAEL POWER  
Staff Writer

**Y**ou've taken the mistletoe down, thrown the leftover turkey into the freezer and put the Christmas tree on the curb.

Time to make good on that New Year's resolution and drop a few pounds, or quit smoking or whatever self-improvement you've promised yourself for 2007.

Want to increase your chances of success?

You might consider chucking that diet plan along with the Christmas tree, said Nancy Bevilacqua, a public health nutritionist with York Region.

"As a New Year's resolution, (dieting) is probably the wrong way to go," she said.

"People who start diets generally fall off their plan shortly after."

If that describes you, you're not alone.

A survey in 2004 by eDiets.com found 30 per cent of those who made a health and fitness resolution persevered until February, while only about 20 per cent kept it up for six months or more.

So if you're looking to improve your eating habits, the best resolution is one that's smaller and more manageable, Ms Bevilacqua said.

For example, instead of resolving to change everything at once, promise yourself you'll eat one or two more servings of fruits or vegetables each day. Too much ambition at first can make those changes tough to stick with in the long term. "If you're not a breakfast eater, you could say, 'My resolution is to have breakfast every day,'" she said.

"It might not seem like much, but it's a big change for people who've never eaten breakfast. Changing your habits isn't an easy thing to do, so that's why taking those small steps is so important."

## TOUGHEST TIME

"Besides, the new year might be the toughest time to drop weight," said Mark Berber, a psychiatrist at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

Up to 20 per cent of Canadians suffer from seasonal affective disorder, or the winter blues, he said.

One of the core symptoms of that condition is an increase in appetite and weight gain.

Even for those who feel fine during winter, cold weather can limit options for outdoor activity.

People often feel the need to sleep more at this time of year.

"It's not an easy time to start trying to lose weight," he said. "I don't believe you're setting yourself up for failure, but you're seriously handicapped."

"Those planning to butt out in 2007 will make their task easier by reading *The Easy Way to Stop Smoking*, by Allen Carr, Dr. Berber said.

And whatever major resolution you have in mind, don't kid yourself that it's going to be easy.

"The resolutions that people make are particularly difficult ones and that's why they wait until New Year's eve," Dr. Berber said.

"They're choosing to make major life changes on this magical day of the year."

And start slow if you're planning an exercise routine to go with your virtuous new diet, said public health nurse Pauline Gillen.

Try 10 minutes each day and gradually build up to a maximum of

60 minutes.

If you plan to start exercising in the new year, also try getting active with friends or family members, Ms Gillen said.

Group activities will help keep you motivated to stick with your regime.

Try different activities to help you decide what you like, rather than jumping into a program you might not enjoy.

"If you have any doubts, it's strongly recommended you consult your health care professional," Ms Gillen said.

"And listen to your body. If it's painful, I'd recommend to stop or bring it to a lower level."



NANCY BEVILACQUA: Public health nutritionist says dieting wrong way to go.

**MARKHAM SPRING HOMESHOW**  
February 23, 24 & 25, 2007  
Markham Fairgrounds

**Just a Friendly Reminder...**  
We will be closed the first 3 weeks in January and we will re-open on Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>/07. Look for some new entrees and baking items on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
From the staff at Reesor Farm Kitchen  
We wish you a wonderful 2007.  
100 Ringwood Dr., #21, Stouffville (905) 640-2270  
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## Learn to Skate Programs for Boys & Girls

Offered by the **Stouffville Skating Club**

Programs taught by Skate Canada Certified Coaches

### Winter sessions for ages 3 and up

# Registration

**MONDAY, JANUARY 8TH**  
5:00-7:00PM

In the Lobby of the Stouffville Arena

For questions call Linda Roman 905-642-2645 or visit [www.stouffvilleskate.com](http://www.stouffvilleskate.com)

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THE WORDS READ LIKE DOWN AND ACROSS.

L I B R E Z V T L G E  
B N Q T E G I U R T Y  
P R F A D E R A S A A  
I O G U H M G R J Q W  
S C O R P I O U K U A  
C I E U N N M S L A R  
E R L S L I B R A R I  
S P C A P R I C O I E  
S A G I T T A R I U S  
X C A N C E R P O S I

**Matthew & Megan**

Interests/Hobbies: Megan - Figure skating, hockey, skiing & swimming.  
Matthew - Hockey, basketball, baseball & skiing.  
Saving money for: University.

**Boris**

Interests/Hobbies: Basketball, piano, listening to music, badminton.  
Saving money & points for: Future education in Japan.

**Evan**

Interests/Hobbies: Swimming, hockey, skiing, pets - guinea pig & budgie.  
Saving money & points for: Nintendo Wii & PS2.

**Senthura**

Interests/Hobbies: Play basketball, volleyball, soccer & football, go to malls.  
Saving money for: Education, buy a laptop, points for cellphone.

**Picture not available**

Interests/Hobbies: Skateboarding, playing hockey.  
Saving money & points for: Skateboard, video games.

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