

In the second of a two-part series, Mind Your Body catches up with another reader to find out how she fared with the New Year resolution she made for 2014. **Joan Chew** reports

Glad to gain weight

Resolution: Getting over an aversion to food

Freelance tutor S.Y. Lim (right), 41, no longer sees food as her enemy, though she does not know if she will ever regard it as a friend.



PHOTO: DIOS VINCOY JR FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

A year ago, she would record every morsel of food she ate, plan her diet a day ahead and make dinner her only regular meal of the day.

Now, she eats three square meals a day and does not count every single calorie, though she continues to be a mindful eater.

That means eating healthy – choosing soups and whole grains, using healthier cooking methods and having most meals at home, rather than eating out.

She also now tries to drink a glass of milk an hour before bedtime, as

dietitian Vanessa McNamara of The Travelling Dietitian had warned that Ms Lim probably lacked calcium in her diet.

Ms Lim admits that she is still fearful of gaining weight, but has given herself more leeway to eat food which she would not touch previously.

This might be fried treats such as goreng pisang (fried banana fritter) and curry puffs, if she can share a piece with someone.

“Otherwise, I will choose not to take it,” she said resolutely.

Ms Lim’s weight issues date back to when she was overweight as a child, which prompted her to go on a diet.

So she began dieting. In her late 20s, her weight dropped to 55kg, which is in the acceptable range for her height of 1.66m.

But it did not stop there. She kept on dieting until she weighed just 36kg last year.

Since making her resolution to put on some weight, Ms Lim now tips the scale at 46kg.

She is doing her best to conquer her aversion to food. “If I don’t enjoy eating now when I’m 41, when would I be able to enjoy it?”

She added: “I still want to work on this resolution next year. I aim to eat a slice of cake or a plate of char siew rice on my own without feeling guilty.”

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Quality of glucosamine in other countries

In USA, 14 glucosamine and 43 chondroitin products were analysed in the University of Maryland. It was found that the actual amount of glucosamine or chondroitin in some products ranged from 0% to 115% compared to what was claimed on their labels. (Journal of the American Nutraceutical Association 2000 ; 3(1) : 37-44)

A similar study conducted in the University of Alberta, Canada, also found that 13 out of 14 commercially available glucosamine contained less than 82% of the amount stated on their labels. Some were even less than 50%. (Journal of Rheumatology 2002 ; 29(11) : 2407-9)

This prompted researchers to recommend that “Prior to obtaining any supplement containing chondroitin sulfate or glucosamine, the consumer should become informed about the manufacturer and the product.

The Arthritis Foundation advised that “When a supplement has been studied with good results, find out which brand was used in the study, and buy that.”

They also cautioned that “It is unknown if less than pure, non-researched sources have a good safety profile.”

Regulations in Singapore

In Singapore, glucosamine can be imported and sold without a licence. They are not subjected to pre-market approval by HSA. This means that glucosamine need not be approved before sale. The responsibility in ensuring the safety and quality rests with the importer, manufacturer, distributor and seller.

This is why recently, a number of jointcare products have been found by HSA to contain undeclared potent western medicinal ingredients, including steroids even though they claimed to contain natural herbal ingredients. Therefore, caution should be taken when taking health supplements.

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