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How can you maintain new healthy habits you may be establishing? Of course, the challenge for all of us is that we are all human and prone to being imperfect. So, how can you enjoy celebrations without guilt and still achieve your hauroa/wellbeing goals? Let me introduce you to the 3-meal rule.

The 3-meal rule

None of us are perfect, I'm not and I certainly don't expect you to be. Experience has shown that being too restrictive about eating is not sustainable long term. We all need to "live a little". There will always be birthdays, anniversaries, work parties, holidays, and other social functions. To be expected to not indulge in some treat foods (and drinks) is unrealistic. Just make sure the treats don't become too frequent prompting old habits to creep back in.

The 3-meal rule is a good way to think about treats. It works like this: of the 21 meals in a week (three meals a day), achieving whole-food healthy meals for 18 of these leaves three meals per week for you to choose what you want to eat. It could be sweet treats, carb-laden pizza or pasta, or some birthday cake. This is entirely up to you, but at least choose something that you really like, and want. And enjoy it! These three meals don't have to be scheduled in as "must have" cheat meals, but rather just dealt with as encountered. If you don't have any occasions like this for a couple of weeks, this is not a cue to save up all your treat meals to use in one week! It is rather about finding the balance between living a whole-food healthy and nutritious diet most of the time and including treat foods on the odd occasion.



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It's what you do 90% of the time that counts, and enjoying celebrations without guilt is important. So from NEXT week onwards consider making the 3-meal rule one of your guidelines for life-long hauroa.

Go Low “HI”

And here is another sound principle we would like to leave you with - go low HI! No, I'm not referring to the GI (Glycaemic Index), but the Human Interference factor. The HI factor is a scale indicating the extent to which a food has encountered human interference (HI); in other words, the level of processing of that food has been subjected to. On a scale of 1-10, 1 indicates the least interfered with, or processed food (low HI) and 10 indicates the most interfered with, or processed (high HI). Vegetables like broccoli or cauliflower have an HI factor of 1, and pasta or crackers would have a HI factor of 10. We find the HI a great way to view foods, assisting our decision making: if you ever get lost in the details consider their HI factor and choose predominantly low HI, unprocessed whole foods.