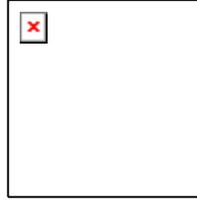


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Health Director Challenges North Carolinians to Maintain Weight through Holidays

Raleigh – With the holiday season upon us and steadily increasing numbers of North Carolinians who are either overweight or obese, State Health Director Leah Devlin today announced the beginning of the Eat Smart, Move More – Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge.

“The holidays can be stressful enough without the added pressure of thinking about dieting,” Devlin said. “So this holiday season, with a series of feasts and celebrations just around the corner, we are encouraging people not to focus on losing weight. Instead, we ask that they challenge themselves to maintain their current weight through the holidays.”

Maintaining one's weight during the holiday season is important because, while the amount of weight gained varies from person to person, what is consistent is that the extra pounds gained during the holiday season are rarely ever lost. This seasonal weight gain accumulates throughout the years and may be a major contributor to obesity later in life.

“Many people don't worry about a few pounds gained during the holidays because they promise themselves they'll make up for it in the new year.” Devlin said. “Unfortunately, as most of us probably know from our own short-lived New Year's resolutions, in many instances the weight not only doesn't come off in January, it never comes off.”

With this in mind, this holiday season North Carolinians are being encouraged to resist the temptation to overindulge over the holidays, even if they promise themselves they'll make up for it in the new year. Instead, experts agree that the best strategy for the holiday season is for people to strive to maintain their weight.

The Eat Smart, Move More – Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge is a way for North Carolinians to learn how to enjoy the holidays without adding on extra pounds.

The seven week challenge runs from Nov. 13 through Dec. 31 and is for everyone.

People who are at a healthy weight are encouraged to challenge themselves to stay there. Each pound not gained is one that individuals won't be struggling with come January.

Those who have recently lost weight can use the Holiday Challenge as motivation to stay the course

and not let the next month and a half of temptation derail all the progress they have made

For people who are among the two-thirds of Americans who have a few pounds to lose, the Holiday Challenge is a great time to start developing healthy behaviors for healthier lifestyle in the new year.

Challenge participants will receive a weekly newsletter filled with tips, recipes, and other items to help the successfully complete the challenge. They will also be able to chat with others across state taking the challenge, download tools to help them succeed and ask the experts questions about healthy eating and physical activity.

For more information about the Holiday Challenge or to sign-up to participate, please visit www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com.

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