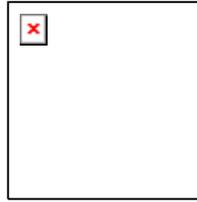


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## North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

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Contact: Carol Schriber

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### ***Eat Smart, Move More...NC* challenges North Carolinians to avoid holiday weight gain**

RALEIGH – The second annual *Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain!* Holiday Challenge will begin on Nov. 19. This free, six-week Internet-based program provides strategies, tips and resources to combat the weight gain that the average person experiences during the holiday season.

Most people gain between one and five pounds over the holidays. The amount of weight gained varies from person to person, but most do not ever lose those extra pounds.

“The important thing is for people to just maintain their weight during the holidays,” says State Health Director Leah Devlin. “From Thanksgiving through the end of the year, we are bombarded with food and beverages at every social gathering while finding ourselves with very little time to be active. With all of the sweets and treats that the season brings, this is not the time for anyone to try and lose weight, but we do want to keep people from gaining.”

The challenge is open to everyone. Whether already at a healthy weight or carrying a few extra pounds, everyone can benefit from the tips on how to enjoy the holidays without over-indulging. Those interested in participating can register at [www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com](http://www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com). Participation is free.

The challenge is designed to help people manage the triggers that cause them to gain weight over the holidays. Each week, participants will receive a newsletter via email containing tips on managing holiday stress, giving healthy gifts, squeezing in physical activity, eating healthy while traveling, and navigating parties. Recipes for quick, easy, healthy dinners to prepare on busy nights and for healthier holiday goodies are also included. A food diary to track food and drink, an activity log, and a weight log are available to download from the website.

In the 2006 inaugural challenge, over 2,200 people participated from around the state. Of those who completed the challenge, 85 percent reported that they maintained their weight.

Debbie Crane is one of the participants who maintained their weight using the challenge last year.

“The challenge was a very positive experience,” says Crane. “Getting the email message every week

really helped to keep me focused. The topics covered were right on target and the reminders were terrific. It was the first time I have ever been able to 'maintain' during the holiday season. I'm looking forward to doing it again this year."

Another participant, Shelby Sanders says, "I tracked what I ate, how much activity I did, and what I weighed each week. I read the newsletter each week and used the tips they gave me. I didn't lose any weight, but I didn't gain any either!"

Sanders also plans to do the challenge again this year. She will be blogging about her experiences on [www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com](http://www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com) to help others overcome the challenges they face while trying to maintain their weight.

*Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain!* Holiday Challenge is a part of the *Eat Smart, Move More...NC* movement to increase healthy eating and physical activity opportunities wherever North Carolinians live, learn, earn, play and pray. Find out more at [www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com).

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