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**Don't let holiday weight gain weigh you down:
*Sign up now for the free Holiday Challenge!***

RALEIGH – As the holiday season quickly approaches, many begin to worry about fitting into their favorite jeans once January rolls around. Many North Carolinians gain between 1 to 5 pounds each holiday season. Although those are small gains, most people who gain weight during the holidays never manage to return to their pre-holiday weight.

This year, don't let holiday weight gain weigh you down! The statewide *Eat Smart, Move More NC* movement is gearing up for the fourth annual free "Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge." Rather than focusing on trying to lose weight — a difficult task at this time of year — this free six-week challenge provides participants with tips, tricks and ideas to help them maintain their weight throughout the holiday season.

Free on-line sign-up is now open at www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com. Only an email address is needed to join. All participant information is kept confidential.

The challenge will begin on Nov. 23 and run through Dec. 31. People who sign up early and complete the pre-survey will receive bonus healthy holiday recipes and a shopping list.

Each week, participants will receive free weekly emailed newsletters containing tips to manage holiday stress, ideas for fitting in physical activity during the busy season, and resources for cooking quick and easy meals when time is in short supply. A calorie counter, food log and activity log are also available for download to help people track their progress.

In 2008, more than 5,400 people from all 100 North Carolina counties and 47 other states took part in the Challenge. At the end of the program, 79 percent reported maintaining 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.

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Location: 101 Blair Drive • Adams Building • Raleigh, N.C. 27603

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