



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

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Contact: Carol Schriber, NC DHHS Public Affairs, (919) 733-9190

Don't be afraid of the holidays – Sign up Nov. 1 for the Holiday Challenge!

RALEIGH – As ghouls and goblins creep out to play, holiday season is on its way.

Some folks might want to run and hide at the thought of tempting treats at their fingertips, Halloween leftovers, and the prospect of their favorite pants getting too tight to button. Many North Carolinians gain 1 to 5 pounds each holiday season, but scariest of all is the fact that most people who gain weight during the holidays never manage to return to their pre-holiday weight.

This year, don't be afraid of the holidays! The statewide *Eat Smart, Move More NC* movement is gearing up for the third 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 begins Nov. 1 at www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com. Only an email address is needed to join. All participant information is kept confidential.

The challenge will begin on Nov. 24 and run through Dec. 31. Those who sign up early and complete the pre-survey will receive bonus healthy Thanksgiving 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.

New this year will be an "ask the experts" feature, where participants can write in to fitness and nutrition experts with their questions on how to maintain their healthy eating and physical activity routine during the hectic holiday season.

Those who want to get started before Nov. 24 can also visit www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com for other tips and information on eating smart and moving more.

Worksites can promote the challenge beginning Nov. 1 by downloading a free step-by-step Holiday Challenge Healthy Start Activity packet available at the professionals' website, www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.

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In 2007, more than 3,500 people from 97 North Carolina counties, 24 other states, and three other countries took part in the Challenge. At the conclusion of the program, 84 percent of the participants reported maintaining their weight.

The Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge is a part of the statewide 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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