



“This year, the only thing that should be stuffed for the holidays is the turkey.”

That’s the motto of the 11th Annual “Eat Smart, Move More, Maintain Don’t Gain Holiday Challenge,” a seven-week, email-based event that helps people avoid the bulge of holiday overindulging. The Florida Department of Health in Broward County encourages everyone to sign up. It’s free.

Surveys show that many people gain one to five pounds over the holidays and may never lose it. Sounds small but it adds up over time. But suppose you didn’t gain it? The point of the Holiday Challenge is not to lose weight (although who would complain). The point is to maintain your weight amid all the temptations, feasts, family parties, soirees and endless bowls of sweets that we all encounter at this time of year. Think of the Challenge as a friend encouraging you to be strong. Until December 31, your “friend” will email you daily tips, a weekly newsletter, a weekly challenge, recipes, social media posts and logs for you to track your food, weight and activities. With balance and moderation, you can enjoy the holiday festivities and remain healthy.

Choose fresh fruit instead of candy. Limit fat, salt and sweet foods. Find fun ways to stay active, such as dancing to your favorite holiday music or going for a brisk walk after holiday meals. Make it a goal to be active for at least 30 minutes a day.

The Challenge gives you tips:

- Survive a holiday party;
- Manage holiday stress;
- Be a healthy host;
- Fit physical activity into your day;
- Prepare quick and healthy meals;
- Serve healthy holiday recipes.

Does the Challenge work? Last year, 15,650 people participated, including 2,145 in Florida through Healthiest Weight Florida (second largest behind North Carolina). Of those who reported after last year’s Challenge, 67.6 percent maintained their weight, 16.9 percent lost three to five pounds and 7.4 percent lost over five pounds. About three-quarters were confident they could keep off the weight and 95.7 percent said they would keep using the tips they learned. More information, enroll: healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/holiday.html or esmmweighless.com/holiday-challenge-live.

This content was submitted by The Department of Health Broward County.

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