Employer Wellness Tool Kit

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This tool kit contains templates for activities, assessment tools and additional resources that can be adapted and incorporated into your employee wellness program.

Tips for using these resources:

Participation in wellness challenges should be voluntary for employees and available to all.

Create a wellness committee to help communicate and implement your program.

Have fun and be creative in offering challenges. Adapt them to your unique culture and make them your own!

Workplace Wellness Consultation:

A certified Workplace Wellness Consultant from Univera Healthcare is available to meet with you and offer:

- An overview of available wellness resources through the health plan
- An assessment of your current wellness program
- Recommendations for next steps

Contact your Univera Healthcare account representative or broker to schedule your consultation.

Important information:

It is the employer's responsibility to assure that incentives and prizes are in compliance with all ACA and IRS regulations. Consult with your legal counsel for guidance.

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This Holiday Season, Maintain... Don't Gain!

Join our 8-week holiday weight management challenge.

This program is designed to encourage good eating habits during the holiday season.

Weigh in before Thanksgiving. Weigh out after New Year. Maintain your weight and win prizes!

Important dates to remember:

Register by

Initial weigh-ins week of

Final weigh-in week of

How to Register:

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Maintain, Don't Gain Program Guide

PURPOSE

Maintain, Don't Gain is a weight management program designed to encourage everyone to maintain their weight during the holiday season (Thanksgiving through New Year's). This six- to eight-week program is designed to encourage good eating habits and being physically active most days of the week during the holiday season. By controlling holiday weight gain and adopting a healthier lifestyle, people can decrease their risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke and other lifestyle-related illnesses.

Maintain, Don't Gain was originally developed by the Texas Department of State Health Services-Cardiovascular Health and Wellness Program. It is a Community and Worksite Wellness Program. The program is available in its original form at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/nutrition.htm.

Included in this program guide are:

- Overview of the Maintain, Don't Gain program
- Getting started and Timeline for program coordinator
- Weigh-in/weight-out log
- Participant exercise and fruit/veggie log
- Weekly email tips
- Program Evaluation

Why do Maintain, Don't Gain?

Program Overview

The average American gains 1-2 pounds during the holiday season. While this may not sound like a lot, most never lose it, so that weight accumulates over the years. People who are already overweight or obese tend to gain an average of 5 pounds during the holiday season. This six- to eight-week program is designed to encourage healthy choices for proper diet and physical activity during the holiday season.

Goal: To maintain weight throughout the holiday season. Weight loss is allowed but is not the objective.

Registration Fee (optional): Decided by Program Coordinator. Use fees to purchase incentives/prizes if there is no other budget for these items, or you could divide collected fees among those who successfully maintain (or lose) weight during the program.

How to Get Started… Coordinator's Guide

- ❑ Select a Program Coordinator or Committee
- ❑ Set program start (before Thanksgiving) and end (after New Year's Day) dates to coincide with holiday season
- ❑ Decide on weekly prizes/incentives and grand prize (if offering)
- ❑ Decide if you will collect a registration fee: $5 or $10 is suggested

4 Weeks prior to start date

- ❑ Schedule dates for rooms to weigh-in and weigh-out
- ❑ **OPTIONAL:** Determine the collection mechanism for any entry fee or potential prizes
- ❑ **OPTIONAL:** Schedule education programs and demonstrations
- ❑ Advertise program guidelines to employees:
  - Participants weigh in on a date before Thanksgiving to get their baseline weight recorded
  - Participants weigh out on a date after New Year's to get their ending weight
  - Participants can lose weight but do not get extra credit for that loss
  - Participants are encouraged to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and to be physically active most days of the week
  - List registration fee if charging one

Start Date

Note: Everyone should be weighed on the same scale in the same location, both before and after, with clothes on (decide if you will require people to weigh in with their shoes on or off). Weighing should be done by the Program Coordinator, or their designee.

- ❑ Weigh in participants on weigh in date, collect fees*, and hand out weekly log sheets (if using)
- ❑ Ask participants to complete "before" survey (see appendix)
- ❑ OPTIONAL: Schedule first educational program for that day

* One method for collecting fees and beginning weights is to have an envelope for each participant. Put the money in the envelope and seal it. Write the person's name, beginning weight, and the date on the envelope. Keep all the envelopes in a secure location.

Weekly after start date

- ❑ Send weekly e-mail (or post flyers) with tips for managing eating and exercise during the holidays. Also promote any programs being offered
- ❑ OPTIONAL: Offer weekly or bi-weekly education programs or activities
- ❑ OPTIONAL: Collect weekly logs

End date

Note: Everyone should be weighed on the same scale in the same location, both before and after, with clothes on (decide if you will require people to weigh in with their shoes on or off). Weighing should be done by the Program Coordinator, or their designee.

- ❑ Weigh out participants on the final date
- ❑ Ask participants to complete "after" survey (see appendix)

1-2 Weeks after end date

- ❑ Advertise successes to the entire worksite and congratulate those who participated.
- ❑ Review Program Evaluation Forms and make notations for future planning.

Maintain, Don't Gain, Weekly Emails

Week 1:

Take charge of your weight this holiday season!

Did you know that the average American gains 1-2 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's? While this may not sound like a lot, most people never lose it, so that weight accumulates over the years. People who are already overweight or obese tend to gain an average of 5 pounds during the holiday season. This holiday season; make a pledge to Maintain, Don't Gain!

Use these tips to avoid those extra holiday pounds:

Keep moving! Aim for at least 30 minutes a day of exercise. If you currently aren't active, start with 5-10 minutes and build up to 30 - any exercise is better than none. Make a plan and stick to it.

Add lots of color! Eating lots of colorful fruits and vegetables have proven to help with weight management. They are low in calories and loaded with vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which helps you feel full. Try to make half of each meal vegetables and fruits.

Set a goal and celebrate your successes! Making exercise and healthy eating a regular habit takes commitment and planning. Set an achievable goal and then celebrate your success. Then set a new goal, and soon you will have lots of new healthy habits!

For more information on weight management, check out the CDC's Healthy Weight website.

Week 2:

Add "healthy" to every holiday helping

It's that time of year when you and your family are inspired to cook your favorite comfort foods or sweet treats. But these high-calorie dishes can add up to holiday love handles. Thankfully, there are few simple tricks to turn any traditional recipe into a lower-calorie health food that's still delicious.

Here are some easy ways to give your homemade dishes a healthy makeover. Try these out to help you manage your weight – all season long.

Go low. Swap low- or nonfat Greek yogurt for sour cream in dips, appetizers, and casseroles. Instead of full-fat cheese, choose low-fat cheese. For dishes that call for lots of butter, like stuffing or sweet potatoes, use half or two-thirds the butter called for – you will cut a lot of calories without affecting the taste.

Bring a backup. Be sure to bring your favorite healthy dish to the party. That way, if you don't see anything healthy to eat, you have your dish to help you stay on track.

Brighten up. Replace one heavy starch dish with a fresh fruit or a bright vegetable dish – such as mixed greens or roasted asparagus. Fill up on the veggies first – make sure half your plate is veggies and fruit.

Week 3:

Simple ways to sneak in fitness

The holiday season is one of the busiest times of the year. Between parties, traveling, baking, and shopping, there's not much time for exercise. And this is the season when you need it the most. It can help you beat stress, boost energy, and burn off all those homemade cookies.

Here are some smart ways to fit in fitness. Every step counts on your mission to manage your weight!

Move more. Use the stairs. Take a walk at lunch. When you run errands, park farther away so you can walk as much as you can. Basically, anytime there's a chance to move, do it.

Make it social. Start a walking group at work. Keep your dog happy with a quick run. Catch up with an old friend or family member for a walk while you boost the health of your heart.

Break it up. If you don't have time to exercise for 30 minutes, split it up into a couple of 15-minute workouts or three 10-minute walks. You will get the same health benefits.

One way to make sure you are getting the exercise you need is to track it. You can use the American Heart Association's Activity Tracker to track your activity, or, if you want to track both what you are eating and how much exercise you are getting, use My Fitness Pal. Both are free.

Check **Eating Well** or the **Mayo Clinic** for healthy Thanksgiving recipes.

Week 4:

Stay on track – wherever your travels take you

Travel can trip you up if you are watching your weight. But there are always ways to stay healthy and motivated – even when you are surrounded by tempting, high-fat foods.

Here are some tips to help you stick with a healthy food and fitness plan during your holiday travel.

Snack smart. If you are driving to your destination, be sure to pack healthy snacks to take with you. Raw vegetables like carrots, celery, or cauliflower, hard-boiled eggs, cheese and whole-grain crackers, apples or nuts are all portable, healthy snacks. Don't forget to pack some water too. For more tips on healthy snacks, check here.

Put healthy in the mix. If you're helping out with a big family dinner, bring a vegetable side dish or salad. Try to make half your plate vegetables.

Know when to stop. Still hungry? Remember, it takes 20 minutes for your stomach to signal your brain that you're full. So if you think you want second helpings, take a break for 20 minutes, then ask yourself if you really want more.

Week 5:

Celebrate the season with ease

You may enjoy hosting holiday gatherings or entertaining out-of-town guests. But sometimes, stress can crash your party and ruin your weight management plan. Here are some simple ways to help you get back your balance – and handle whatever the holidays throw at you.

Unplug. Take a break from checking your phone and email. Instead, enjoy a long bath, go for a nature walk (exercise is a great stress reliever!), or play a board game with your friends or family. Just be present and happy in the moment.

Bust a move. Turn on your favorite jams and show off your best moves! Music has been shown to lower mild to moderate depression, anxiety, and even pain. Dancing releases endorphins (happy hormones) into your body.

Laugh it off. Laughing relaxes your body and clears your mind. Feeling anxious? Watch a comedy or spend time with a funny friend. A good belly laugh will wash your tension away.

Week 6:

Arm yourself with smarter snacks

Nutritionists agree that one of the best ways to maintain your weight is by eating small meals throughout the day, with healthy snacks in between. This helps keep your metabolism up and running, and lowers your risk of overeating at mealtime.

Try these easy tips to help you stay on track.

Week 7:

Visit your supermarket.

There are plenty of healthy snack options at your neighborhood grocery store – just look around. Try edamame (soy beans) or air-popped popcorn. Cut, raw vegetables are always a great, low-calorie snack!

Stock up on fruits. Fresh, seasonal picks are solid snack choices. Canned or frozen fruits are healthy as long as they don't contain added sweetener (avoid fruit canned in "syrup").

Tune in to your hunger. Snack when you're genuinely hungry, and not because you're stressed or bored (go for a quick walk instead). Also, try not to snack when you're watching TV. It's too easy to lose track of how much you're eating.

Whatever your snack choice, never eat right out of the package – it is too easy to eat more than you intended. Instead, serve yourself one portion and put the package away.

Week 8:

Bring your party game plan

Holiday parties are the mecca of delicious, high-calorie foods – from cocktails and wine to cookies, chips, cheese, and more.

Here are some easy tips to guide you – so you can hit the party and still stick with your health goals.

Don't arrive hungry. Eat a small, protein-packed snack before you head to the party. That way, you won't be starving when you get there.

Pick and choose. Fill up your party plate carefully. Reach for healthy, high-fiber foods, like fresh, sliced veggies, roasted turkey, whole-grain crackers, and hummus.

L**ose the booze.** Think twice before you enjoy that glass of wine or festive cocktail. Alcohol is empty calories, plus it fuels your appetite. If you're going to drink, alternate with water to help cut the amount of alcohol you drink.

Week 9:

Here's to the new, healthy you!

Happy New Year! Keep using the healthy habits you've learned, so you can maintain, not gain – plus work toward new goals – for the New Year.

Here are some ways you can keep up the healthy work and keep off the extra weight.

Curb cravings. Reprogram your taste buds to ditch cravings for sugar, salt, and fats by eating real, fresh, whole foods. Keep tempting foods out of the house.

Go for 30. Aim to get at least 30 minutes of exercise every day. Try working out with a friend to stay motivated.

Stay on the outside. Shop the outer aisles of the grocery store. It's where you'll find most of the minimally-processed whole foods – like fruits and vegetables, fish, chicken, and low-fat dairy products (but don't skip over the whole grains like brown rice or quinoa).

If one of your New Year's Resolutions is to lose weight, try tracking what you eat and how much exercise you are getting. People who track what they eat are more likely to reach their weight loss goal. There are many tools online for tracking what you eat; check out My Fitness Pal – it is one option that is free and easy to use.

Post-Challenge Questions

As a result of the program, which of the following did you do? (Check all that apply)

- Increase physical activity
- Make healthier baking substitutions
- Decrease portion size
- Increase water intake and reduce sugary beverages
- None of the above
- Other

Were you successful in maintaining your weight? Y N

If Maintain, Don't Gain was offered again, would you participate? Y N

If no, why not?

If offered during the next Maintain, Don't Gain program, which of the following events would you most likely participate in? (Check all that apply)

- Wellness walks
- Cooking demos
- Onsite educational programs
- Physical activity demos
- Stress reduction demos
- Other

What would influence your decision to participate again? (Check all that apply)

- Desire to manage weight
- Desire to improve my health
- Interest in program
- Having a team motivate me
- Being able to participate in events
- Variety of interactive events
- Prizes
- Other

What did you like MOST about the Maintain, Don't Gain challenge?

What did you like LEAST about the Maintain, Don't Gain challenge?

If you have an inspiring story to share about how you adopted a new healthy habit or overcame a barrier to work towards your goal, we want to hear from you! Your story can motivate and inspire your coworkers to make healthy changes too! If you are willing to share a brief testimonial please write your name here and we will reach out to you.

Thank you for completing the survey. Your responses are extremely helpful in planning future programs.