



EMPLOYER WELLNESS TOOL KIT



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EMPLOYER WELLNESS TOOL KIT

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 Excellus BlueCross BlueShield 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 Excellus BCBS 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.



As part of our commitment to helping our employees be the best they can be, your health and well-being are important to us. We are interested in knowing what wellness programs you would find valuable. Please complete this survey and return to (NAME) by (DATE). Your feedback will help us develop and implement wellness programs, resources and activities. Thank you in advance for your input!



Please rate your interest in the following health topics:

	Very Interested	Interested	Not Interested
Back Care			
Stress Management			
Nutrition/Healthy Eating			
Physical Activity			
Smoking Cessation			
Sleep			
Healthcare Consumerism/Making the Most of Your Benefit Plan			
Other (Please list)			

If it was a topic of interest, how likely are you to participate in the following?

	Very Interested	Interested	Not Interested
Single Session Workshop			
Team Challenge (i.e. Physical Activity)			
Online Program (webinars, activity tracking, etc)			

What are the best ways to communicate with you about wellness opportunities? (check all that apply)

Email

Company newsletter

Company intranet or blog

Texting

Posters

Mail delivered to home

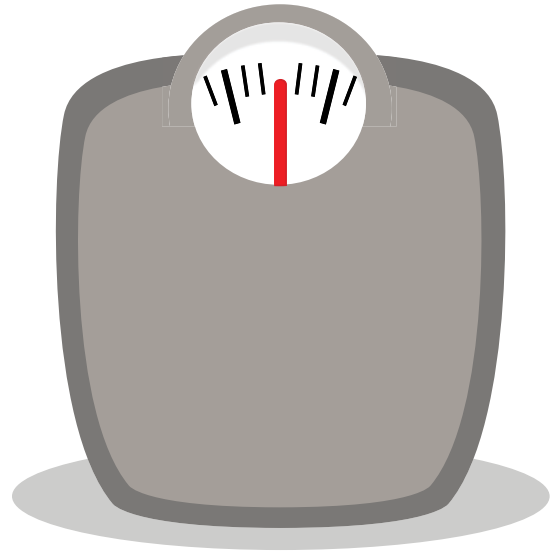
Do you have any suggestions on how we may help you make healthier choices?

BE A BIGGEST WINNER!

Join our 8-week weight loss team challenge

Form teams consisting of 4 to 6 employees

The team that loses the highest average percentage of weight wins!



Important dates to remember:

Register by

Initial weigh-ins week of

Half-way point weigh-ins week of

Final weigh-in week of

How to Register:

BIGGEST WINNER GUIDELINES

The goal of the Biggest Winner Challenge is to motivate and encourage employees to adopt healthy lifestyle changes that result in increasing health and feeling good and decreasing excess weight. This team-based approach creates a supportive environment that helps employees achieve their goals and make lasting change. The following are guidelines and best practices for making your challenge successful.



Timeline

- Determine length of challenge (recommended 8-12 weeks)
- Begin communicating 4 weeks prior to start date

Teams

- Form teams consisting of 4 to 6 employees (up to 10 employees per team is recommended)
- Designate team captains and choose team names
- The winning team is determined based on percentage weight loss as a whole team

Weigh-ins

- Secure a reliable scale and determine location of weigh-in
- Determine who will conduct weigh-ins and communicate up front who that person(s) will be
- Determine frequency of weigh-ins (initial weigh-in, final weigh-in and optional biweekly weigh-ins)
- Participants must weigh-in at all weigh-in dates or make alternative arrangements if scheduling conflicts arise
- Be consistent-weigh in guidelines generally are to keep clothes on (empty all pockets) and remove shoes

Prizes

- Consider prizes not only for the end of the challenge but also throughout the challenge to maintain engagement
- Lunch with the CEO, Fit Bits, NutriBullets, feature winning team's picture on poster and/or newsletter
- Water bottles or pedometers, fresh fruit Fridays, salad bar day at lunch
- Company logo'd swag

Things to do before the challenge begins (Focus areas: Communication & Engagement)

Focus on promotion and communication (i.e. posters, email blasts, flyers, etc.)

- Get a senior leader to make an announcement or send out an email
- Outline goals of the challenge
- Distribute goal setting & action plan handout
- Stress confidentiality of the program
- Be transparent about who is conducting weigh ins

Things to do during the challenge (Focus areas: Motivation & Energizing)

- Create an environment that makes it easier for people to adopt healthy lifestyles (i.e. encourage stair use, exchange healthy recipes, subsidize healthy foods in cafeteria, etc.)
- Supply pedometers or walking maps
- Run a "Healthy Selfie" campaign. Encourage employees to take a "selfie" of themselves or of coworkers doing a healthy activity (i.e. taking the stairs, eating a salad for lunch, etc.)
- Organize team walks at lunch
- Recognize and celebrate monthly winners (either individuals or teams with the highest percentage of weight loss)

Things to do after the challenge (Focus areas: Evaluating Program & Celebrating Successes)

- Recognize the biggest winner and/or winning team. Take a picture of winning team and post in newsletter and/or poster
- Send out the post-challenge survey to all participants
- Ask participants to share a success story or helpful tip

Additional Resources

- Easy to use weekly motivational messages
- Goal Setting and Action Plan handout
- Post challenge survey questions
- Excel spread sheet to track weigh-ins

SAMPLE WEEKLY EMAILS

Sample 1

Subject: You may be thirsty, not hungry

Drink more water or other calorie-free beverages. You may be thirsty, not hungry. Save some calories by quenching your thirst with a glass of refreshing ice cold water. Or add a slice of lemon or peach for flavor.

Focus on what to add to your diet, instead of what to take away. Many of us don't get in the recommended 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. When you fill up on these plant based foods, you are less likely to overeat on higher calorie foods.

Are you really hungry, or are you bored, nervous, stressed etc.? Ask yourself, am I really hungry? If so, you need to refuel your body. If you are eating for emotional reasons, food will not help in the long run.

Sample 2

Subject: Cook Once, Eat Twice

Have a well equipped kitchen with healthy, quick to make foods. When you can make a meal in minutes, you are less likely to call for a delivered pizza. Salad in the bag becomes salad as a meal when you add canned tuna or salmon, canned chick peas, a few almonds, cherry tomatoes and a low calorie dressing.

Cook once, eat twice. When baking chicken, make extra. Serve the extra as a leftover and create chicken quesadillas or chicken Caesar salad.

When preparing some dinners, you can again cook once and eat twice if they are freezer friendly dishes. Try this with lasagna, soups, chili and stews.

Sample 3

Subject: Eat Your Favorite Foods

Are you struggling with eating too much and moving too little? Check out a few tips below-

Choose your night time snacks with care. Do you suffer from "eating amnesia" where you eat because of habit, not hunger? This often occurs after dinner, in front of the TV, in your favorite chair. Consider allowing yourself a snack of about 100 calories and then close the kitchen for the evening.

Favorite foods can be worked into your healthy eating plan. As soon as you tell yourself you can't have something, you want it even more. So enjoy your favorite foods in moderation and avoid the side dish of guilt that often accompanies it.

Small, frequent meals help us to control our appetite and weight. The key is to make those frequent meals small also.

Sample 4

Subject: Fitting in Fitness

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 and get some extra steps. 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. Use an app like My Fitness Pal (http://www.myfitnesspal.com/welcome/learn_more)...it's free!

Sample 5

Subject: 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.

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.



BIGGEST WINNER GOAL SETTING AND ACTION PLAN

Long Term Goal

This goal should be something within reach at the end of the 8 weeks and should be the main reason for joining the challenge. This is the real “prize”

My long term goal(s) for this challenge is:

Short Term Goals

Your short-term goals are the ones that you will be shooting for now which will yield your long-term goal.

My Short Term Goals are:

Action Plan

This is the section where you will list the things you will change, do, or acknowledge every day to achieve your short term goals that will lead to your ultimate long term goal. Keep it specific and realistic.

Examples:

1. Train with weights at least 3-4 times a week
2. Complete 30 min. of cardio 4-6 days a week
3. Eat a fruit or vegetable as a snack between meals 5 days/week
4. Keep a daily journal of how I feel and what I eat

My Action Plan for this challenge is:

I hereby state that I will abide by everything listed above. I can do it! It will be achieved! There is no stopping me! I have the discipline, determination, and the will to achieve all of my goals!

Signature:

Date:

Your contract is now valid and it is up to you and your passions to achieve your goal. Make copies of your contract and post it everywhere you need a reminder (i.e. on the fridge, on the bathroom mirror, in your agenda, etc.)

POST-CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

Feedback after the challenge is equally important. Ask participants to answer these questions to assist in evaluating the success of the program.

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase physical activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Consult physician in regards to my weight management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read food labels before purchasing | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make healthier baking substitutions | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease portion size | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase water intake and reduce sugary beverages | |

Were you successful in meeting your weight goal? Y/N

If the Biggest Winner was offered again, would you participate? Y/N If no, why not?

If offered during the next Biggest Winner program, which of the following events would you most likely participate in? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wellness walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical activity demos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demos | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress reduction demos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onsite educational programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire to manage weight | <input type="checkbox"/> Being able to participate in events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire to improve my health | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of interactive events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in program | <input type="checkbox"/> Prizes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having a team motivate me | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

What did you like MOST about the Biggest Winner challenge?

What did you like LEAST about the Biggest Winner challenge?

If you have an inspiring story to share about your weight loss success, 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.

TAKE THE 10 DAY REAL FOOD CHALLENGE!

Do you eat most of your meals away from home? Do you default to fast food or take out? Are you looking for ways to eat healthier? Try this 10 Day Challenge to practice simple strategies that can lead to a healthier way of eating.

How does it work? Each day add a new challenge to your routine. At the end of 10 days turn in your tracking sheet to be eligible for prizes.



Important dates to remember:

Register by

Challenge Starts

Challenge Ends

How to Register:

10 DAY REAL FOOD CHALLENGE

The goal of the 10 Day Real Food Challenge is to motivate and encourage employees to incorporate simple changes that can lead to long term healthy lifestyles. It's not only what we eat that matters, but also how much and even where we eat it. Long term behavior change takes practice. This challenge is designed to introduce one new challenge each day, building on previous activities. At the end of 10 days, participants will have incorporated and practiced different eating habits and dietary strategies, which may lead to long term change.

*This 10 Day Real Food challenge is inspired by Michael Pollan's book "In Defense of Food" and Brian Wansink's "The End of Mindless Eating." The program was adapted from the 100 Days of Real Food project.



Timeline

- Determine the dates of your challenge
- Begin Communicating four weeks before your challenge begins

Things to do before the challenge begins (Focus areas: Communication & Engagement)

- Focus on promotion and communication (i.e. posters, email blasts, flyers, etc.)
- Get a senior leader to make an announcement or send out an email
- Outline goals of the challenge
- Distribute tracking tools
- Stress that participation is voluntary

Things to do during the challenge (Focus areas: Motivation & Energizing)

- Share the daily emails describing the benefits of each challenge and resources to learn more.
- Incorporate some fun activities during the challenge (i.e. exchange healthy recipes, host a salad bar lunch)
- Run a "Healthy Selfie" campaign. Encourage employees to take a "selfie" of themselves or of coworkers doing a healthy activity during the challenge

Things to do after the challenge (Focus areas: Evaluating Program & Celebrating Successes)

- Collect completed challenge pledges.
- Congratulate all who participated and those who completed the challenges.
- Distribute program evaluation form.

Additional Resources

- Promotional Poster
- Daily educational email content
- Optional journaling tracker
- Program evaluation

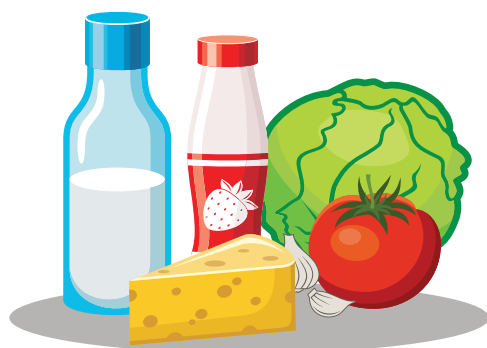
10 DAY REAL FOOD CHALLENGE

Name:

Phone:

Use this chart to track your participation. Goal: start at day one and add a new challenge each day while continuing previous challenges.

MINI PLEDGES:		DATES OF PLEDGE:									
1	Go Fast Food Free: avoid the drive-thru										
2	Nature's Fast Food: Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day										
3	The Better Beverage Challenge: Drink water, coffee, tea, herbal tea. Avoid sugary drinks										
4	Expand Your Palate: Try two new whole foods										
5	Go Whole: Eat 100% whole grain for two meals per day										
6	Eating Mindfully: Eat one meal per day with no distractions, e.g. no TV, reading, or eating in the car										
7	Small Plate Movement: Use no more than a 9" plate for your largest meal of the day										
8	Read the Label: Replace packaged food you normally eat with a less processed version (i.e. cereal, crackers, etc.)										
9	Be Social: Have a home cooked meal with family or friends.										
10	Go Meatless: Be a vegetarian for a day										



10 DAY REAL FOOD CHALLENGE

DAILY CHALLENGE COMMUNICATION:

1. Go Fast Food Free: Skip the drive thru and avoid eating at fast food restaurants.

Fast food contains high amounts of unwanted nutrients like salt, fat and artificial chemicals. For healthy eating on the run, try these tips:

- Bring your lunch from home. Brown bagging it can save you money and gives you more control over what you are eating.
- Cook extra food on the weekend to make weekday meal preparation fast and easy.
- Create a "survival kit" of healthy foods to keep at work or in your car. Include things like fruit, nuts, yogurt, veggies and hummus, or cheese sticks. Don't forget to include a water bottle.
- Keep a well-stocked pantry and freezer to help make meal planning and preparation easier. Include things like canned beans, whole grain rice and pasta, frozen or low sodium canned vegetables, frozen portions of fish, chicken or lean beef.

2. Nature's Fast Food: Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Incorporate at least one fruit or vegetable with your breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Don't make vegetables an afterthought. Try to plan your meals to include a couple of different vegetables and increase your serving size of them. Add cucumbers, fresh spinach leaves or sprouts to your sandwich along with lettuce or tomato. Make soup and add extra vegetables to it. Stir-fried chicken can also include lots of vegetables including mushrooms, peppers, baby corn, cauliflower, carrots and celery.

Tips to increase fruit intake:

- Add fruit to hot or cold cereal
- Add to a tossed salad (i.e. pear, apple)
- Make a smoothie with fat free/soy milk and fresh/frozen fruit
- Add a piece of fruit to your lunch or snack
- Keep fruit visible
- Take some time and cut up fruit now to refrigerate and enjoy later
- Still have that bedtime craving? Add strawberries or peaches to your ice cream or a small amount of peanut butter to go along with your apple slices.



3. The Better Beverage Challenge: Limit your beverages to water, coffee, tea, herbal tea, and other unsweetened, zero-calorie drinks.

- **Drinking Water Helps Maintain the Balance of Body Fluids.** Your body is composed of about 60% water. The functions of these bodily fluids include digestion, absorption, circulation, creation of saliva, transportation of nutrients, and maintenance of body temperature.
- **Water Can Help Control Calories.** For years, dieters have been drinking lots of water as a weight loss strategy. While water doesn't have any magical effect on weight loss, substituting it for higher calorie beverages can certainly help.
- **Water Helps Energize Muscles.** Cells that don't maintain their balance of fluids and electrolytes shrivel, which can result in muscle fatigue.



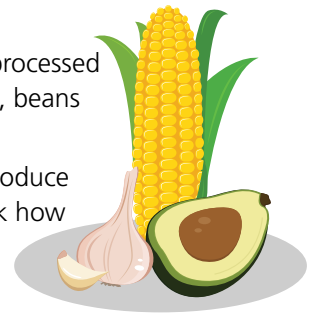
- **Water Helps Keep Skin Looking Good.** Your skin contains plenty of water, and functions as a protective barrier to prevent excess fluid loss
- **Water Helps Your Kidneys.** Body fluids transport waste products in and out of cells. The main toxin in the body is blood urea nitrogen, a water-soluble waste that is able to pass through the kidneys to be excreted in the urine.
- **Water Helps Maintain Normal Bowel Function.** Adequate hydration keeps things flowing along your gastrointestinal tract and prevents constipation.

(Source: WebMD)

4. Expand Your Palate: Try two new whole foods.

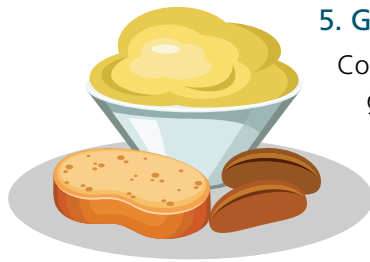
Whole foods are foods that can be picked out of a garden, field, or off trees. These foods are unprocessed (or very minimally processed) and in their most natural state. Examples: avocados, sweet potatoes, beans and nuts.

- Explore ethnic food. Many cultures offer a plant based cuisine prepared with interesting herbs or spices.
- Look through old family recipes. Chances are your grandmother had a great casserole recipe using food from the garden.
- Visit a farmers market or the produce section in the grocery store. Ask how to prepare a fruit or vegetable you've never tried before.



5. Go Whole: Eat 100% Whole Grain for two meals per day.

Consume only 100% whole grains when eating bread, pasta, and any other products with grains. Look for the word "whole" in the ingredient list. A grain is considered "whole" if it has the bran, the germ and the endosperm intact. Refined grains have been modified and are missing some of those components as well as valuable nutrients. White flour, rice and pasta are examples of refined grains. Refined grains may be "enriched" with vitamins, however consuming food in its natural state assures that you get the full nutritional impact. Whole grain foods are high in natural fiber.



- For Breakfast, try whole grain cereal, steel cut oats or whole wheat English Muffins
- Add some quinoa or faro to a salad for lunch, or include barley in home made soup.
- Substitute whole grain brown rice for white rice with dinner.
- Bonus! Popcorn is a great source of whole grain. Enjoy some as an evening snack.

(Source: wholegrainscouncil.org)

6. Eating Mindfully: Eat one meal per day with no distractions.

Learning to prepare new foods, making different meal choices, and experiencing new flavors requires that you think about what you are buying and cooking. Why not spend some time focusing on the experience of eating your food as well. As you eat, pay attention to the taste and texture of each bite. Mindful eating leads to better eating habits and allows you to use all your senses to explore, savor and taste what you eat.

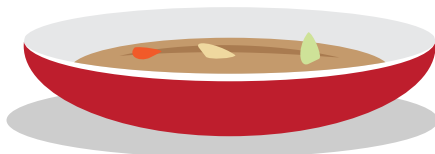
- Turn off the TV and your phone.
- Don't eat in your car or at your desk.
- Create some atmosphere with flowers, lighting or nice linens.

7. Small Plate Movement:

Portion size matters! Many of us eat more than we think because we tend to eat what is on our plate. Use no more than a 9" plate for your largest meal of the day. Smaller plates mean smaller portions. Other easy environmental tips:

- Plate food at the counter and put the rest of the food away before dining.
- Store cut up veggies or fruit in clear containers easily visible in the refrigerator.
- Hide less healthy choices on high shelves in the back of cupboards.
- Don't eat from the container. Pre-portion serving sizes of your favorite snacks. Nuts and popcorn are nutritious choices!

<http://www.smallplatemovement.org/index.htm#>



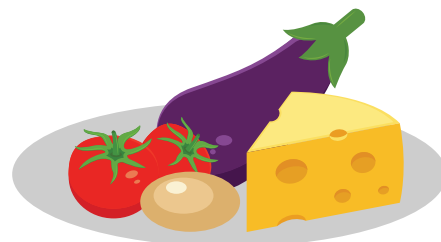


8. Read Labels:

All packaged foods have a “Nutrition Facts” label. The labels provide valuable information about the quality of the food. Start by reading the ingredients list - fewer ingredients usually indicate a less processed food. Look at the serving size and calories per serving to make sure you aren’t eating too much. Fat, sodium and sugar are also useful numbers - try to minimize these. Learn more at: <https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/nutrition-facts-and-food-labels/the-basics-of-the-nutrition-facts-label>

9. Be Social:

Dining with family or friends offer benefits that go beyond the table. Learn more at: <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/about-us/benefits-of-family-dinners/>



10. Go Meatless:

Try being a vegetarian for a day. Vegetarians eat no meat, poultry or fish, but they can eat eggs and dairy. Vegans do not eat or use any animal products. <http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/nutshell.htm>

Do it all today!

Try incorporating all of your new habits in one day. How does it feel? Are there any activities that you are going to incorporate long term? Change happens one small step at a time. Adopting even one behavior change from this challenge can help you on the road to a healthier lifestyle!

LEARN MORE!:

In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan <http://michaelpollan.com/books/in-defense-of-food/>,

The End of Mindless Eating by Brian Wansink

BONUS ACTIVITY:

Track how you feel throughout the challenge.

DAY	TOPIC	HOW I FEEL
1	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
2	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
3	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
4	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
5	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
6	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
7	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
8	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
9	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	
10	Mood	
	Sleep	
	Energy	
	Other observations	

POST-CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Stopped eating fast food | Increase water intake and reduce sugary beverages |
| Read food labels before purchasing | Tried some new whole foods |
| Cooked more meals at home | Other |
| Decrease portion size | |

2. Were you successful in completing all 10 challenges? Y/N

3. If the 10 Day Real Food Challenge was offered again, would you participate? Y/N

If no, why not?

4. If offered during the next 10 Day Real Food program, which of the following events would you most likely participate in? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Group activities | Journaling |
| Cooking demos | Other |
| Onsite educational programs | |

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

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

6. What did you like MOST about the 10 Day Real Food challenge?

7. What did you like LEAST about the 10 Day Real Food challenge?

8. 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.

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:

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/nccddphp/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)
- ☐ OPTIONAL: Schedule first educational program for that day
- ☐ Ask participants to complete “before” survey (see appendix)

* 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.

Lose 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 | Increase water intake and reduce sugary beverages |
| Make healthier baking substitutions | None of the above |
| Decrease portion size | 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 | Physical activity demos |
| Cooking demos | Stress reduction demos |
| Onsite educational programs | Other |

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

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

Wellness Promotional Collateral

Contact your Excellus BCBS Account Representative or Broker to Order

Description	Promotional Materials
Quit for Life Telephonic tobacco cessation counseling.	Promotional brochure B-2979 Promotional poster B-4439
Blue 365 Web-based discount program on wellness products and services.	Promotional flyer B-3939 FAQ Document B-2856
Telemedicine A virtual visit with a doctor as an alternative to urgent care or emergency when your own doctor isn't available.	Promotional Flyer B5463
Infographics Eye-catching posters offering education about important health topics	E-Cigarettes B-5390 Colon Cancer Screening B-5845 Back Pain B-4652 Mental Health B-5927 Managing Diabetes B-5804
Live Fearless Colorful hand-outs offering simple wellness tips for everyone.	Plate sizes B-5891 Standing B-5890 Sleep B-5888 Balance B-5893 Flossing B-5892
Positivity Cards 52 colorful and inspirational post cards that can be shared	B-5439