BID-Plymouth: Holiday 1 Pound Challenge

The Problem

More than one-third of United States adults are obese, placing them at an increased risk for developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. Once obesity is established, it is difficult to reverse, therefore, identifying and implementing effective strategies for prevention are imperative. It is commonly asserted that people gain an average of five pounds during the holiday season, defined as Thanksgiving to New Years. Several credible sources indicate that the average holiday weight gain is actually about one pound. This gain, however, is usually not reversed during the spring and summer months and may contribute to increased body weight during adulthood. BID-Plymouth’s livewell employee health committee hypothesized that challenging individuals with an incentive to lose one pound during the holiday season would be an effective strategy to prevent holiday weight gain.

Aim/Goal

1. Providing an incentive program to raise staff awareness to prevent holiday weight gain.
2. Enroll 100 employees in the incentive based Holiday 1 Pound Challenge.

The Team

- Amy Smith, Cardiology;
- Marcia Richards, RD MEd MCHES, Nutrition Services;
- Megan Luizzi, Patient Relations, Department of Quality and Patient Safety;
- Deborah Schopperle, Project Manager, Marketing and Communications.

The Interventions

- Holiday 1 Pound Challenge concept presented to livewell committee October; project and $25.00 gift card incentive approved
- Marketing initiated on October 27, 2015 through “This Week” email and flyers
- Weigh-ins scheduled for hospital campus and two satellite sites on November 19, 2015 and January 4, 2016; participants required to weigh in and out at the same location
- 10 Ways to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain distributed
- Participants complete program survey prior to being weighed on January 4, 2016; receive $25.00 Visa Gift Card if 1 lb. lost

The Results/Progress to Date

We exceeded our goal of 100 employees by 61% --161 employees joined the Holiday 1 Pound Challenge on November 19. On Jan. 4, 2016, 99 returned for weigh-out and 55 employees lost 1 lb. or more with a total loss of 237.9 lbs. All 99 completed a post survey to assess the impact of offering an incentive on enrollment; 45% enrolled because of the gift card compared to 55% who joined to avoid gaining weight during the holidays; 63% would have enrolled without the incentive and 37% would not have enrolled if a gift card was not offered (Figure 1).

Lessons Learned

Exceeding enrollment expectations by 61% initially indicated that offering an incentive encouraged participation. However, survey data reflects that avoiding weight gain was the primary motivator and the majority would have joined without the incentive. This simple intervention proved to be a promising strategy to prevent holiday weight gain.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Enroll 175 employees in the 2016 Holiday 1 Pound Challenge
- Initiate Weight Watchers program in late January to sustain weight loss efforts