

Need an energy boost this winter? Join the *Health Challenge*!

Montreal, January 5, 2012 – The eighth annual *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge* is just around the corner and is looking to get all Quebecers eating better, being more active, and taking care of themselves. There's no better time for everyone to take an active role in their health, get energized, and enjoy winter to its fullest! Counting more than 700,000 participants since 2005, the *Health Challenge* is the annual, one-of-a-kind movement for good health in Quebec. Registration is free at HealthChallenge.ca before March 1, 2012.

A new spokesperson

This year's spokesperson is none other than energetic host and actor Mélanie Maynard in a made-to-measure role! "Like everyone else, I'm starting to see the importance of being healthy and taking care of myself. But juggling marriage, family, and work isn't always easy. That's where the *Health Challenge* comes in. For me, it's just the motivation I need to improve my lifestyle and have more energy," she explains. "That's why, to kick off the new year, I'm signing up for the *Health Challenge*!"

Be healthier and get energized

"Opting for a balanced diet that is chock-full of fruit and vegetables, exercising on a regular basis, and working toward a more balanced lifestyle can help you stay healthy and avoid a host of long-term health problems. What's more, when you make healthier choices, you feel fit and you have more energy in the day-to-day," explains Dr. Roxane Néron of ACTI-MENU, the *Health Challenge* organizers. "Actually, over 80% of the 2011 *Health Challenge* participants who took the survey said that they had more energy after completing the Challenge." Without a doubt, the *Health Challenge* is an opportunity not to be missed!

Concrete goals that spell F-U-N

The way the *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge* works couldn't be simpler: participants commit to achieve three goals during a six-week period. Specifically, from March 1 to April 11, participants aim to eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables and to do at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day for a minimum of 5 days a week. For their third goal, participants can choose either getting into yoga or assigning priority to priorities to help them live life to the fullest and better cope with their busy lives. The *Health Challenge's* Wellness goals are made possible through support from the Prends soin de toi program. Participants who want to go beyond the basic *Challenge* goals can also work on improving other aspects of their health, such as their diet (whole grains, dairy products, water); their fitness level (cardio and flexibility); and their overall wellness (stress management and relaxation).

The *Health Challenge* is a fun and individualized way for participants to take concrete steps toward taking care of both their bodies and their minds!

Free support for success

Free support has always been an integral part of the *Health Challenge*, and this year's participants are getting more support than ever before. The latest additions include the Health Challenge Passport (available exclusively at IGA), the new and improved website (HealthChallenge.ca), plus the possibility of following the adventures of a family who takes up the *Challenge* with the help of three coaches (a nutritionist, a kinesiologist, and a yoga instructor). As in previous years, the *Challenge* will be offering its weekly motivational emails, its Facebook page (facebook.com/defisante), the TELUS 30mobile app for smartphones, and the Healthy Home quiz—a fun way for parents to find strategies that they can apply at home to help their families in the *Health Challenge*.

And as extra motivation, there are close to \$20,000 in prizes to be won, including the family prize, an RESP contribution, courtesy of Desjardins; and a trip, courtesy of IGA.

Municipalities are getting involved

Participants are encouraged to check out the sports and recreational facilities available in their municipalities, and to take advantage of the local parks, pools, and arenas to reach their goals and stay active this winter!

This year, more than 215 municipalities and local communities will be working together to make the *Health Challenge* a province-wide affair. Participation is up by 20% since last year, when 178 municipalities and local communities took part in the project that promotes healthy living. Visit HealthChallenge.ca for a list of participating municipalities in each region and the activities that they offer.

Join the Challenge

The new spokesperson of the *Health Challenge*, Mélanie Maynard, is inviting all Quebecers to get energized by signing up on their own, with their family, or as a team before March 1, 2012, at HealthChallenge.ca.

About the 5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge

The *5/30 Health and Wellness Challenge* is an **ACTI-MENU** initiative that is made possible through the support of **Québec en Forme** and through partnerships with **Quebec's Directions de santé publique des Agences de la santé et des services sociaux**, the **Quebec government** (the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux; the Ministère de l'Éducation, des Loisirs et du Sport; and the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire), the **Canadian Cancer Society**, and the **Prends soin de toi** program. The *Health Challenge* is produced in collaboration with the **Fédération Québécoise des Municipalités**, the **Union of Quebec Municipalities**, the **Réseau Québécois des Villes et Villages en santé**, **Kino-Québec**, as well as **IGA**, **Desjardins**, **TELUS Health Solutions**, **AstraZeneca**, **Danone**, **Evian**, **Multi-Markes**, **Exceldor**, and the **Allegro Residences**.

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