

Workplace Wellness



Workplace Wellness: Low-Cost Wellness Strategies

Workplace wellness programs that support employees and the environment they work in not only have a positive impact on employee morale, they often present a positive return on investment for the employer, too. Workplace wellness programs can often be expensive. However, there are many ways employers can make positive changes for little or no cost.

Nutrition

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

- Provide healthy eating reminders and prompts to employees using posters, email, payroll stuffers, etc.
- Offer fruits and vegetables in vending machines and in the cafeteria.
- Provide cookbooks and cooking classes for employees' families.
- Ensure on-site cafeterias follow healthy cooking practices and set nutritional standards that align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Offer healthy foods at meetings, conferences and catered events.
- Use point-of-decision prompts near vending machines and cafeteria stations to promote healthier choices.
- Offer employee-led campaigns, demonstrations or programs.
- Offer locally grown fruits and vegetables at the workplace (this could be a workplace farmer's market or a community-supported agriculture drop-off point).
- Price non-nutritious foods in vending machines and cafeterias at higher prices.
- Provide a space away from the work area for breaks and lunch.
- Make kitchen equipment available to employees.
- Provide an opportunity for on-site gardening, if possible.

Beverage Consumption

- Make water available throughout the day.
- Offer healthy drink options, such as juice and tea, in vending machines and the cafeteria.
- Modify worksite vending contracts to increase the number of healthy options.
- Price non-nutritious beverages at a higher cost.

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Portion Control

- Label foods to show serving size and/or nutritional content.
- Provide food models, food scales for weighing and pictures to help employees assess portion size.
- Offer appropriate portion sizes at meetings, workplace events and in the cafeteria.

Breastfeeding

- Support nursing mothers by providing rooms for expressing milk in a secure and relaxed environment, a refrigerator for storage of breast milk, policies that support breast feeding and lactation education programs.
- Offer flexible scheduling and/or on-site or near-site child care to allow for milk expression during the workday.
- Adopt alternative work options (e.g., teleworking, part-time, extended maternity) for breast-feeding mothers returning to work.
- Educate personnel on the importance of supporting breast-feeding coworkers.

TV & Food Advertising

- Place TVs in non-eating areas of the workplace.
- Limit advertising (e.g., posters and other media) for unhealthy food.

Physical Activity/Weight Management

- Allow access to on- and off-site gyms and recreational activities before, during and after work hours.
- Encourage and support participation in after-work recreation leagues.
- Provide cash incentives or reduced insurance costs for participation in physical activity and/or weight management or maintenance activities.
- Provide shower and/or changing facilities at the workplace.
- Provide outdoor exercise areas such as fields and trails for employee use.
- Provide bicycle racks in safe, convenient and accessible locations.
- Offer on-site fitness opportunities, such as group classes or personal training.
- Provide an on-site exercise facility.
- Set up programs that have strong social support systems and incentives:
 - Buddy or team physical activity goals
 - Programs that involve workers and family
- Provide discounted or subsidized memberships at local health clubs, recreation centers or YMCAs.
- Set up programs to encourage physical activity, such as pedometer walking challenges.
- Offer flexible work hours and breaks to allow for physical activity during the day.
- Host walk-and-talk meetings.
- Map out on-site trails or nearby walking routes and destinations.
- Have employees map out their own biking or walking route to and from work.
- Post motivational signs at elevators and escalators to encourage stair usage.
- Provide exercise/physical fitness messages and information to employees.
- Provide or support physical activity events on-site or in the community.
- Start employee activity clubs such as walking or bicycling clubs.

Workplace *Wellness*

- Sponsor a “bike to work” day and reward employees who participate.
- Set up a suggestion box for fitness and health tips.

General Health Education

- Have a policy outlining the requirements and functions of a comprehensive workplace wellness program.
- Have a wellness plan in place that addresses the purpose, nature, duration, resources required, participants and expected results of a workplace wellness program.
- Give employees copies of the physical activity, nutrition and tobacco use policies.
- Promote and encourage employee participation in the physical activity/fitness, nutrition and weight management programs.
- Provide health education information to employees.
- Have a committee that meets at least once a month to oversee the wellness program.
- Offer regular health education presentations on various physical activity, nutrition and wellness-related topics.
- Ask health associations, health care providers and/or public health agencies to offer free on-site education classes.
- Host a health fair as a kick-off event or as a celebration for completion of a wellness campaign.
- Conduct preventive wellness screenings for blood pressure, body composition, blood cholesterol and diabetes.
- Provide confidential health risk assessments.
- Offer on-site weight management/maintenance programs for employees.
- Add counseling for weight management/maintenance, nutrition and physical activity as a member benefit in health insurance contracts.

Tobacco Cessation

- Establish a company policy prohibiting tobacco use anywhere on the property.
- Provide prompts/posters to support your tobacco-free policy.
- Establish a policy supporting participation in smoking cessation activities during duty time.
- Provide counseling through an individual, group or telephone counseling program.
- Provide counseling through a health plan-sponsored individual, group or telephone counseling program.
- Provide cessation medications through health insurance.