

WORKPLACE WELLNESS

Provided by Alliance 360° Insurance Solutions



Low-cost Wellness Strategies

Workplace wellness programs may not only increase employee morale, but also reap a positive return on investment for employers. Although Work Wellness programs are often expensive, there are ways employers can make positive changes for little or no cost.

Nutrition

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

The following are low-cost strategies that encourage healthy eating:

- Provide healthy eating reminders to employees using posters, emails and intranet posts.
- Offer healthier food options in the vending machines and in the cafeteria, as well as at meetings, conferences and catered events.
- Ensure that on-site cafeterias follow healthy cooking practices and set nutritional standards that align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Provide cookbooks and cooking classes for employees and their families.
- 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 than healthy options.
- Provide an opportunity for on-site gardening, if possible.

Portion Control

Below are tips for encouraging employees to practice portion control:

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

Breast-feeding

Consider the following tips to support nursing mothers in workplace:

- Provide rooms for expressing milk in a secure and relaxed environment and a refrigerator for the storage of breast milk.
- Create policies that support breast-feeding and lactation education programs.
- Offer flexible scheduling and on-site or near-site childcare to allow for milk expression during the workday.
- Adopt alternative work options (for example, telecommuting, part-time or extended maternity) for breast-feeding mothers returning to work.
- Educate employees on the importance of supporting breast-feeding co-workers.

Physical Activity and Weight Management

The following are low-cost wellness activities that promote physical activity:

- Allow access to on- and off-site gyms and recreational activities before, during and after work. Encourage and support participation in after-work recreational leagues.
- Provide incentives or reduced insurance costs for participation in physical activity or weight management or maintenance activities.
- Provide showers and changing facilities at the workplace.
- Map out on-site trails or nearby walking routes and destinations. Host walk-and-talk meetings when it is nice outside.
- Provide bicycle racks in safe, convenient and accessible locations. Sponsor a “bike to work” day and reward employees who participate.
- Create activities that have strong social support systems like buddy or team physical activity goals or programs that involve co-workers and their families.
- 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.
- Post motivational signs at elevators and escalators to encourage stair usage.
- Encourage employees to map out their own biking or walking route to and from work.
- Provide or support physical activity events on-site or in the community.

General Health Education

The following tips can help improve overall employee well-being:

- Have a wellness plan in place that addresses the purpose, nature, duration, resources required and expected results of a workplace wellness program.
- Promote and encourage employee participation in the physical activity, nutrition and weight management programs.
- Provide health education articles, handouts or fliers to employees.
- Create a committee that meets at least once a month to oversee your wellness program.
- Offer regular health education presentations on various physical activity, nutrition and wellness-related topics.
- Ask health associations, health care providers 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 mass index, blood cholesterol and blood sugar.
- Provide confidential health risk assessments.
- Offer on-site weight management or maintenance programs for employees.
- Add counseling for weight management or maintenance, nutrition, and physical activity as a benefit in health insurance contracts.

Tobacco Cessation

Consider the following tactics to curb smoking at your workplace:

- Establish a company policy prohibiting tobacco use anywhere on company property.
- Provide posters to support your tobacco-free policy.
- Establish a policy supporting participation in smoking cessation activities.
- Provide tobacco cessation counseling through an individual, group or telephone counseling program.
- Make sure your health plan covers a variety of tobacco cessation medications.

By considering the strategies above, you can implement low-cost wellness activities at your workplace. For help setting up one of these initiatives, contact Alliance 360° Insurance Solutions.