Investing in Health

Proven Health Promotion Practices for Workplaces

- **Tobacco Control**
- **Cancer Screening and Early Detection**
- **Physical Activity and Nutrition**

Partnership for Prevention®
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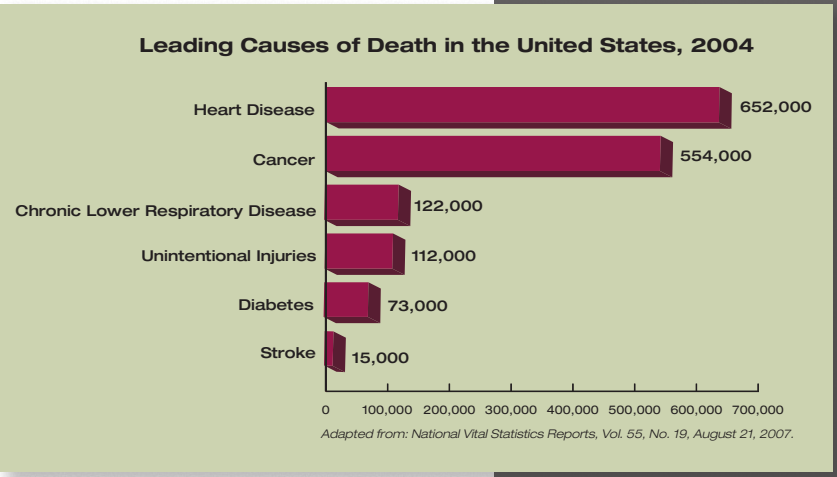
For your convenience, all the Web links in *Investing in Health* can be found and accessed in one location at www.prevent.org/workplaceguide.

Partnership for Prevention® developed *Investing in Health,* with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to help employers promote better employee health.

Introduction

The leading causes of death and disability are familiar—heart disease and stroke, cancer, respiratory disease, and diabetes are among them. But we seldom stop to think about what's behind this toll of chronic disease. Common risk factors including tobacco use, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition often lead to the chronic diseases (shown in the chart to the right) that kill Americans and impact workplaces through increased healthcare and disability costs and reduced productivity.



There are things every employer can do to encourage and motivate their employees to take the actions that can lead to better health. Every workplace can help promote employee health—through their health plans, by conducting their own activities, by linking with community services, or a combination of all three.

Time and money spent on employee health is a worthwhile investment. Healthier workers can help control healthcare costs as, over time, costly serious illnesses are prevented and existing ones are better managed. A healthy workforce can improve overall employee productivity, as well as employee satisfaction and retention. The bottom line? A healthier and more engaged workforce.

Included in this guide are steps any employer can take to improve employee health by:

- **Reducing tobacco use and exposure**
- **Promoting breast, cervical, and colon cancer screening and early detection**
- **Encouraging physical activity and healthy eating**

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Information on Purchasing Health Insurance

If you are a small employer who does not currently offer health insurance, you can find out more about your options from the following resources:

- The Health Policy Institute at Georgetown University provides consumer guides about getting and keeping health insurance for each state and the District of Columbia. Find the guide for your state at www.healthinsuranceinfo.net.
- Contact your state's department of insurance. Each state's Web site should have information about available options for small businesses and/or individuals purchasing health insurance. Find yours at www.naic.org.
- A healthcare coalition/alliance of small employers can help you select a plan. To find out if your city/community has a coalition of businesses working together to get high-value healthcare for their employees, contact the National Business Coalition on Health by calling 202-775-9300 or e-mail them at info@nbch.org.

These topics were selected because they have been shown to improve health and have proven to be successful at the workplace. The recommendations in this guide are drawn directly from the guidance of two groups of experts: The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force,[1] which focuses on evidence-based medical services; and the Task Force on Community Preventive Services,[2] which recommends proven strategies that can be implemented in the community, including at work.

Getting started

Investing in Health will help workplaces of all sizes choose effective health promotion practices at work. Introducing and implementing a health promotion program is similar to introducing any workplace policy, procedure, or regulation. Getting your program started is easy:

1. **Assign responsibility**. This will differ by workplace. Workplaces may create health promotion committees with representatives from different departments, have individuals select programs from vendors and get management approval before proceeding, or have an employee facilitate these activities as part of his/her job. The most important thing is to do what is right for your organization.
2. **Decide what programs to offer.** *Investing in Health* provides information on three health promotion topics that have been shown to improve employee health. However, depending on resources, there are several other health issues a workplace can address. For information on comprehensive employee health programs, visit www.prevent.org/LBE and www.cdc.gov/hwi.
3. **Communicate with employees about changes and new opportunities.** If there is a benefits change, new policy, or new program, be sure to let employees know well in advance (before the effective date). In order to efficiently answer any questions that may come up, use the communications channels you normally use, such as e-mail, posters, and announcements at staff meetings or shift changes.
4. **Ask for feedback** to see if what you did is working well and if employees have suggestions for improvements or additions.

Tobacco Control

The best quit rates can be achieved when your workplace implements all three recommendations.

Workplace tobacco control efforts—including smoking cessation—bring both health and economic benefits. Employer coverage of tobacco-use treatment is ranked among the top three preventive services that employers can offer. Tobacco use decreases employee productivity and drives up healthcare costs. Individuals who quit using tobacco experience significant health benefits, including reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer. An ideal workplace tobacco control program should eliminate all tobacco use, not just cigarettes. Cigar smoke, pipe smoke, and smokeless tobacco also contain cancer-causing agents and can lead to nicotine addiction. Providing tobacco-use treatment coverage through your health plan costs 10–40 cents per member per month.[3]

To give your employees the support and help they need to quit smoking or quit using other tobacco products, *Investing in Health* recommends how to:

- **Implement Tobacco-Free Policies**
- **Offer Proven Tobacco-Use Treatment Benefits Through Your Health Plan**
- **Improve Access to Telephone Quitlines for Tobacco Users**

Know

Investing in Tobacco Control

Tobacco use affects your bottom line

Various research studies have shown that:

- Nonsmoking employees exposed to secondhand smoke have high medical costs due to smoke-related illnesses. Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the chance of developing heart disease and lung cancer by up to 30%.[4]
- Lost productivity costs are about $4,430 per year for current smokers and $3,246 per year for former smokers, compared to $2,623 per year for people who never smoked.[5]
- On average, smokers take two to four more sick days than nonsmokers each year.[6]
- Pregnant smokers are at increased risk for miscarriage, premature birth, and low birthweight babies—all of which impact medical costs. Smoking during pregnancy also increases the risk of stillbirth.[7]

Some groups of people have higher rates of tobacco use than others. These differences may be reflected in your own workplace. For instance:

- The percentage of people who smoke varies by state.[8]
- Smoking varies by education and income level. Among people who are employed and have health insurance, national smoking rates for people with a high school education or less is 34%, compared to 11% of college graduates.[9]
- Employed and insured adults with annual income levels less than $50,000 are 43–50% more likely to smoke than employed and insured adults with annual income levels greater than $50,000.[10]
- Younger adults aged 18–24 years have the highest overall tobacco use rates, and young men are more likely to use chewing tobacco and snuff than older men.[11]

Act

Implement Tobacco-Free Policies

Workplace tobacco-free policies—not allowing the use or sale of tobacco products at work—encourage smokers to quit or reduce tobacco use and protect employees from secondhand smoke exposure. You can:

- **Adopt a tobacco-free policy.** Consider making the entire workplace—both inside and outside—tobacco-free. Include company vehicles, rental space, and all on-site and off-site locations in the policy.
- **Put your policy in writing.** Include information about the health risks of tobacco use, the consequences of using tobacco in prohibited areas, and information on proven quitting aids and programs. A model policy is available at www.cdc.gov/tobacco/secondhand_smoke/00_pdfs/appx.pdf.
- **Train supervisors** to implement and enforce this policy. To assist staff with implementation of the policy, refer to the toolkit available at www.goingsmokefree.org/tools/business.html.
- **Inform employees** 60–90 days in advance of your policy implementation date. Use e-mail, newsletters, payroll inserts, and announcements as communication channels.
- **Support your workplace tobacco-free policy** by posting signs indicating a tobacco-free workplace, and removing tobacco products from on-site vending machines, food services, restaurants, and retail outlets. Host meetings in smoke-free locales.

Tobacco-Free Policies Don't Discriminate

Surveys indicate that a large percentage of employees—smokers and nonsmokers alike—support tobacco-free policies in their workplaces. Remember to emphasize the right to a tobacco-free workplace for all individuals. Keep in mind that many tobacco users want to quit, but find it difficult to do so. Implementing tobacco-free policies may further encourage tobacco users to quit.

Act

Offer Proven Tobacco-Use Treatment Benefits Through Your Health Plan

Offering tobacco-use treatment benefits through your health plan increases the number of tobacco users who quit and remain tobacco-free. Effective interventions or treatments include counseling and medications.[12] Health plan coverage of effective tobacco-use treatments costs employers, on average, 10–40 cents per member per month,[3] but savings exceed the cost of the services within three to five years.[5] Your costs may vary from these estimates. You can:

- **Identify ways to improve coverage of tobacco-use treatment services** under your health plan. For model benefit language see www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0298.pdf or *A Purchaser's Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage* at www.businessgrouphealth.org/benefitstopics/topics/purchasers/fullguide.pdf (pages 415–425).
- **Negotiate various tobacco-use treatment services with your health plan** to include as many of the *Recommended Tobacco-Use Treatment Benefits* listed in the chart on page 7 as possible.
- **Promote existing and new tobacco treatment benefits**, and communicate any benefit changes to employees through newsletters, e-mails, payroll inserts, announcements, and Summary Plan Descriptions. Also encourage employees to talk to their healthcare providers about tobacco-use treatments.
- **Promote coverage** when new tobacco laws or policies are being introduced by your community or state (e.g., smoke-free air laws, tobacco tax increases). These policies may help encourage smokers to quit.

What Does Tobacco-Use Treatment Include?

Tobacco-use treatment generally includes all three components listed below. Note that although each is effective alone, a combination of counseling and medication improves success rates.

- Screening—a medical professional asks the patient if he or she uses tobacco products and is ready to quit.
- Counseling—a trained provider gives personalized guidance on ways to quit using tobacco.
- Pharmacy support—FDA-approved medications to help tobacco users quit. These include over-the-counter and prescription nicotine replacement therapy (i.e., gum, patch, inhaler, nasal spray, and lozenge), and prescription non-nicotine medications (i.e., buproprion [Zyban®, Wellbutrin®], and varenicline [Chantix™]).

Recommended Tobacco-Use Treatment Benefits

- ✓ Screening conducted at every clinical encounter
- ✓ Effective tobacco-use treatments are provided and/or covered, which include:
  - Multiple forms of counseling (i.e., individual, group, telephone)
  - FDA-approved prescription drugs, including bupropion (Zyban®, Wellbutrin®), varenicline (Chantix™), and prescription nicotine replacement therapies (i.e., nasal spray, inhaler, patch)
  - Over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy (i.e., gum, patch, lozenge)
  - Individual treatment courses that cover a minimum of four 10-minute counseling sessions, follow-up contact, and medications
  - A minimum of two courses of therapy (i.e., counseling and medications) each 12-month period
- ✓ All copays and other fees for counseling and medications are eliminated or minimized
- ✓ Spouses and dependents are covered
- ✓ Retirees are covered

Primary Sources:
A Purchaser's Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage;
Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence—2008 Update: A Clinical Practice Guideline

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Act

Improve Access to Telephone Quitlines for Tobacco Users

Telephone quitlines offer a convenient and effective option for treating tobacco dependence. "Proactive" quitlines—which take incoming calls and make follow-up outbound calls to tobacco users—have quit rates that are similar to those of treatments delivered face-to-face in healthcare settings. Some public and private quitlines also offer access to free or discounted over-the-counter tobacco-use treatment medications. Directing employees to quitlines can increase the number of tobacco users who quit and remain tobacco-free. There are many ways to improve employee access to and use of quitlines. Select the option best suited for your workplace:

- **Work with your health plan to minimize or eliminate out-of-pocket costs** for comprehensive quitline services (including screening, counseling, and medication assistance), and to extend services to spouses and dependents.
- **Contract directly with a vendor** to provide quitline services to your employees. For more information about how quitlines work, go to www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/quitlines/index.htm.
- **Promote the services of your state quitline.** To learn more about the tobacco quitline in your state and the free services it provides, refer to the North American Quitline Consortium Web site at www.naquitline.org/index.asp?dbsection=map&dbid=1 for an interactive map or call 800-QUIT-NOW(eligibility for free services varies from state to state).

When arranging for employee access to quitlines, be sure to:

- **Communicate information on quitlines** and promote them through newsletters, payroll inserts, announcements, brochures, e-mails, and your intranet. If services are covered under your health plan, be sure to inform employees about it in the Summary Plan Description.
- **Emphasize to employees that quitline services are confidential.**
- **Inform your employees of available medications** that they can receive through their health benefits. Remember, these complement quitline services to help improve cessation rates.

Community Resources for Tobacco Control

- Find your state tobacco quitline by calling 800-QUIT-NOW, which will direct you to your state quitline, or visit the Web site of the North American Quitline Consortium at www.naquitline.org.
- Locate your local American Cancer Society chapter at www.cancer.org/docroot/com/com_0.asp or call 800-ACS-2345 to find out whether your local chapter sponsors quit smoking classes.
- Find contact information for your local American Lung Association chapter at www.lungusa.org/site/apps/kb/zip/zip.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=37083 or call 800-LUNG-USA for more information on smoking cessation support.

Cancer Screening and Early Detection

for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer

Many cancers, when found early, can be successfully treated and cured. Regular screening examinations—medical tests conducted by a health professional to find different types of cancer—can detect cancers of the breast, cervix, and colon at early stages, when treatment is most likely to be successful. In addition, cervical and colon cancer screening can *prevent* these cancers because abnormal growths are found and removed before they become cancerous. Breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening are ranked highly as cost-effective clinical preventive services, according to the National Commission on Prevention Priorities.[13]

As the second leading cause of death and long-term disability in the U.S., cancer's yearly overall economic costs are estimated to be over $209 billion. Cancer treatment alone can account for 10% of employers' medical claims, according to one study. Estimates show that providing screening for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer costs a typical employer $7.50 per member per month, in contrast to an estimated $2,360 per member per month in claim costs for a person with cancer.[14]

Health economists assess screening tests in terms of their cost-effectiveness. Screening for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer provides good value for the dollar when compared to waiting to treat these cancers at later stages.[15] These three cancer screenings are among the most cost-effective clinical preventive services available.

Both men and women should have periodic screening tests for cancer based on age, gender, and health history. *Investing in Health* recommends how to:

- **Encourage Employees to Get Screened for Cancer**
- **Work With Your Health Plan to Increase Cancer Screening Rates**

Know

Investing in Cancer Screening and Early Detection

The chart below shows recommended cancer screening exams for men and women with "average risk" for cancer. An individual's medical history may change the age at which screening begins and how often it is done. Employees should ask their doctor at each visit if they should receive any preventive cancer screening services.

Recommended Breast, Cervical, and Colorectal Cancer Screening

Type of cancer	For whom and when?	Exam(s)
Breast cancer[16]	Every 1–2 years for women age 40 and older; the evidence is strongest for women ages 50–69.	Mammogram with or without clinical breast examination
Cervical cancer[17]	At least every 3 years for women who are sexually active or age 21 (whichever comes first) and have a cervix. Screening is not recommended for women over age 65.	Pap smear
Colorectal cancer	Men and women age 50 and older.[18] Screening is generally restricted to persons under age 80. There are several methods for colorectal cancer screening; the frequency of screening depends on type of exam.	The American Cancer Society recommends:[19] • Colonoscopy, every 10 years, or • Take-home, multi-sample fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or fecal immunochemical test (FIT), every year* • Flexible Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years,* or • Double-Contrast Barium Enema, every 5 years,* or • CT Colonography (virtual colonoscopy), every 5 years* **Colonoscopy should be done if test results are positive.*

Community Resources for Cancer Screening and Early Detection

- Many communities offer free or low-cost cancer screening services, often through the health department. To find out if these services are available in your community and who is eligible to receive them, call 800-ACS-2345.
- Your local chapter of the American Cancer Society may offer educational programs, brochures, and other services. Find your local chapter on the ACS Web site at www.cancer.org.
- Call 800-4-CANCER to connect with a cancer information specialist at a regional cancer information center. This 800 number, operated by the National Cancer Institute, serves the U.S., Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and Pacific Islands. Information is available in English and Spanish from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. local time. For on-line chatting via Live Help, go to www.cancer.gov/help. NCI offers free educational materials, information on cancer screening, information for cancer patients and families, smoking cessation advice, and more.

Act

Encourage Employees to Get Screened for Cancer

The Task Force on Community Preventive Services[1] reports that use of cancer screening services increases when employees receive consistent communication and reminders about cancer screening, when services are made available on-site, and when structural barriers, such as using flex time or sick leave for appointments, are addressed. You can:

- **Educate employees** about *why* and *when* they should be screened for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers. Consider distributing fact sheets, pamphlets, and newsletters. Use payroll inserts, bulletin boards, e-mails, notices in mailboxes, announcements at meetings and shift changes, tent cards in break rooms, gender-specific flyers in the bathroom stalls, or whatever works best to reach your workforce. Work with unions or other groups that reach your employees.
- **Host a speaking event.** Speakers may include an employee who detected an early cancer or an expert from your local American Cancer Society. Hold a session during work hours or at lunch. Offer cancer awareness sessions as an alternative for regular safety meetings. Prepare a short video presentation that employees can watch on their own time.
- **Suggest employees get screened as a "gift" to family members** and encourage loved ones to get screened too.
- **Encourage employees to speak with their doctors** about receiving recommended preventive services, including cancer screening and early detection, when they go for a medical visit.
- **Use reminders** to let employees know they are due for a cancer screening service. Some businesses send birthday card reminders. For other ideas, see the chart *Information to Share with Employees* on page 12.
- **Offer on-site screening services**, such as mammography vans or distribution of fecal occult blood test screening kits at your workplace. Check with your local American Cancer Society and local hospitals to see if these services are offered.
- **Provide incentives**, including flex time or paid time off/sick leave, for appointments with health professionals.

Finding Accurate Information About Cancer Screening

You can find accurate cancer screening and early detection information on several Web sites or by calling these organizations. Some of the cancer information materials are available in multiple languages.

- National Cancer Institute at www.cancer.gov or 800-4-CANCER
- American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org or 800-ACS-2345

You may want to have a small group of employees review materials and determine which are best for your workplace. The chart below has several suggestions for materials that may be useful.

Information to Share With Employees

Topics	Materials
Background information on cancer	Cancer: Questions and Answers www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Sites-Types/general
Screening and early detection guidelines	Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_2_3X_ACS_Cancer_Detection_Guidelines_36.asp
Colorectal cancer screening	They Know How to Prevent Colon Cancer, and You Can Too www.cancer.org/downloads/PRO/They_Know_How.pdf
Cervical cancer screening	Pap Tests: Things to Know www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pap-tests-things-to-know
Breast cancer screening	Screening Mammograms: Questions and Answers www.cancer.gov/images/Documents/ffa1fec6-29a4-4c71-a085-78f1afa8e1b8/Fs5_28.pdf
Reminders	Health Reminder Assistant (can register on-line) www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/content/Health_Reminder_Assistant.asp A sample reminder letter from employers to employees www.businessgrouphealth.org/docs/preventioncareletter0107.doc
Health awareness months	Cancer awareness month and related educational materials www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp?year=2008
Personalized on-line health check	The Great American Health Check Challenge www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/health_check.asp

Act

Work With Your Health Plan to Increase Cancer Screening Rates

First ensure that your health plan covers the recommended breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening exams (most basic health plans do). Even if your health plan covers these screening services, there are steps you can take to increase employees' use of screening services. The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends providing incentives and reminders to employees. The Task Force also recommends that health plans offer healthcare providers performance feedback about their cancer screening rates. Additionally, studies show that more people get screened when their out-of-pocket costs, such as co-pays and deductibles, are eliminated or reduced. Work with your health plan to help increase cancer screening among your employees.
You can:

- **Review your current health plan coverage** of breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening. You can find model benefit language for these services in *A Purchaser's Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage* at www.businessgrouphealth.org/benefitstopics/topics/purchasers/fullguide.pdf (pages 131–150, 195–200).
- **Eliminate or minimize co-payments or deductibles** for cancer screening services.
- **Extend coverage** of these services to employees' spouses and dependents and include these services in retiree health plans.
- **Work with your health plan to inform employees of available services**. For example, include the information in Summary Plan Descriptions, meetings to explain benefits, and health plan newsletters.
- **Ask your health plan to provide personal reminders** to employees of the cancer screening benefits covered under the health plan.
- **Work with your health plan to ensure that the plans's healthcare providers routinely receive feedback** on their rates of cancer screening (how often they provide cancer screening services for eligible patients).

After receiving information from you or your health plan on cancer screening, employees may have questions about cancer treatment. Your health plan representative can answer questions about coverage.

If an Employee Is Diagnosed With Cancer

If an employee is diagnosed with cancer, be supportive. Let them know what the health plan offers, and, if appropriate, direct the employee to helpful information. Two reliable resources for accurate, up-to-date information about diagnosis and treatment options include:

- National Cancer Institute at www.cancer.gov or call 800-4-CANCER
- American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org or call 800-ACS-2345

Employees may also want to consult a comprehensive cancer center—a hospital that specializes in cancer treatments—which can be located by calling 800-4-CANCER.

Physical Activity and Nutrition

Leading an active, healthy lifestyle has many benefits. With regular physical activity and healthy eating habits, people can control their weight and reduce the chances of developing serious, chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers. Small changes can make a difference. Eating right and being active helps lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, reduce anxiety and depression, and improve osteoarthritis. While maintaining a healthy weight and leading an active lifestyle can be difficult for many people, by providing a supportive work environment you can improve the lives of your employees and may save your workplace money through increased productivity. A research study has shown that being overweight is associated with 39 million lost work days per year; 239 million restricted-activity days; 90 million bed days; and 63 million physician visits per year.[20] Being physically active and eating healthy foods results in improved mental well-being, healthier weight, and more strength and flexibility. Additionally, employees who exercise have fewer illnesses, are less stressed, and have better outlooks toward work and better relationships at work.[21] You can find out how much physical inactivity is costing your company by visiting CDC's cost calculator at www.ecu.edu/picostcalc.

To help your employees improve their physical activity levels and eating habits, *Investing in Health* recommends how to:

- **Increase Physical Activity Through Social Support and the Workplace Environment**
- **Improve Nutrition Through Social Support and the Workplace Environment**

Know

Investing in Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

Information to provide to your employees

Getting enough physical activity and eating right—by making good food choices, controlling portion sizes, and limiting fats and sugars—are key to being healthy and maintaining a healthy weight.

Consuming the right amount of calories each day depends on a person's age, gender, and activity level. For further information on what an average adult should eat each day visit the Sample USDA Food Guide and the DASH Eating Plan at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/intake.pdf.

An average adult should get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, five times per week, or 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity, such as jogging, three times per week to attain health benefits (e.g., reducing risk factors for heart disease). This may seem like a big time commitment, but it can be broken up into small increments, of at least 10 minutes, by doing activities such as taking a walk at lunch; using the stairs; walking extra distances by getting off a stop early when using public transportation; or taking a bike to run errands in the neighborhood.

Inform and educate your employees about physical activity, nutrition, and what your company is doing through newsletters, bulletin boards, office mail, company intranet, e-mails, or paycheck inserts. The table below has several suggestions for materials that you may want to share with your employees for this purpose.

Topics	Materials
Background information on nutrition	Nutrition Fact Sheets www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/nutrition_350_ENU_HTML.htm USDA Dietary Guidelines www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/brochure.htm#b3
Background information on physical activity	Tips to Help You Get Active www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/tips.htm What Is Physical Activity? www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical_activity.html Updated Physical Activity Guidelines www.acsm.org
Healthy eating tools	A Healthier You Recipes www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/healthieryou/html/recipes.html Meal Planning and Shopping Tips www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=4
Physical activity tools	Physical Activity for Everyone www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/everyone.htm Physical Activity in Your Daily Life www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2155
Healthy weight information	BMI Calculator www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/bmicalc.htm Choosing a Weight Loss Program www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/choosing.htm

What employers can do

Building support networks can foster workplace morale and team spirit, while creating a culture where people encourage one another to be active and eat better. Enhancing the work environment to improve access to places where people can be physically active has been proven to increase physical activity and may lead to loss of weight or body fat. If employees perceive that others are exercising and eating healthy, even those least motivated could be prompted into action.

Think about ways to appeal to different cultures, age groups, and genders when planning programs for your employees. Make sure employees at off-site locations or who work part-time or night shifts are able to participate. Also, be sure to consider ways to get employees with physical disabilities involved.

Many simple and inexpensive changes can be made in the workplace to create an environment and culture that embraces and encourages eating right and being active. The following lists on pages 18 and 19 provide various program ideas that can be implemented in the workplace, along with related resources. These programs can be put into practice individually or in coordination with one another.

How to Support Employees Who Want to Lose Weight

- Check with your health plan to see if nutrition counseling, obesity counseling, and/or FDA-approved obesity treatments are covered for obese employees or for those whose weight is a risk factor for disease. For more information on recommended coverage, visit The Purchaser's Guide at www.businessgrouphealth.org/benefitstopics/topics/purchasers/condition_specific/evidencestatements/obesity_es.pdf.
- Host a commercial weight loss program meeting at your workplace or nearby for employees who may be interested in participating.
- Encourage employees who have a chronic condition, such as diabetes, heart or kidney disease, to speak with their doctor about getting personalized advice on nutrition and physical activity.

Act

Increase Physical Activity Through Social Support and the Workplace Environment

Social support

- **Set up walking clubs for employees** to participate in before or after work, or during lunch. Encourage people to go at their own pace, including joggers and runners, so that no one feels left out. Using a buddy system is especially helpful to motivate and maintain participation.
- **Organize employees into teams to participate in a pedometer challenge**. Provide an incentive to the winning team. Participants should set a goal of walking 10,000 steps a day.
- **Coordinate off-site events around physical activity**. Consider a softball game, dancing lessons, charity walk/run, or strawberry or apple picking at a nearby farm or orchard.
- **Walk during meetings** rather than sitting around a conference table or in an office. You can set up walking paths within buildings or outside with different distances mapped out.

Environment

- **Make physical activity more accessible and convenient** for employees. Consider installing showers and changing rooms at the workplace. You can also provide safe, free storage for bikes, such as bike racks. If you have the resources, provide treadmills and exercise bikes, or free weights, exercise balls, and mats in an unused conference room or office.
- **Subsidize gym memberships**. Employees are more likely to get and use a gym membership if the cost is reduced or eliminated. Your company can reimburse employees for the cost, or select a health plan that offers discounted gym memberships for plan members.
- **Place reminder messages and signs near stairwells**, elevators, and escalators to encourage employees to take the stairs. Often a quick, eye-catching sign is all it takes to get someone to use the stairs. Research shows that signs can increase stair use by 54%. For sample motivational signs visit www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/motivational_signs.htm. See the box to the right for more suggestions on creating attractive stairwells.
- **Allow employees to use flex time in order to fit physical activity into their workday**. Let employees leave early one day a week or take an extended lunch break to be physically active (e.g., through gym time, dancing or aerobics classes, walking, or running).
- **Encourage office employees to stretch at their desks or do yoga**. Flexibility and balance are an important part of physical activity. Visit the Centre 4 Active Living Web site at www.centre4activeliving.ca/workplace/trr/tools.html to download free yoga and stretching at your desk videos.

Tips for improving stairwells in the workplace

- Stairwells need to be safe, with outside access monitored.
- Stairwells should be well lit.
- Ensure stairwells are unlocked, or that all employees have a key to access them if it is necessary they remain locked.
- Think creatively:
  - Add inspirational and informative quotes, messages, or jingles on walls or stair risers.
  - Provide music in stairwells.
  - Paint or decorate stairwells with attractive colors and themes.
- Add footsteps that lead from the elevators to the stairs so employees know where the stairs are located.

Act

Improve Nutrition Through Social Support and the Workplace Environment

Social support

- **Offer classes on improving nutrition** at the workplace given by a nutritionist or registered dietician. Often a nutritionist from a local hospital will speak at such classes. You can search for a registered dietician who offers workshops at www.eatright.org.
- **Host a healthy potluck for lunch** once a month to allow employees to socialize while eating healthy at work. Additionally, a potluck will expose people to various types of healthy foods and recipes they may not have tried otherwise. For recipes visit www.5aday.com.
- **Change the way milestones such as birthdays, anniversaries, and achievements are celebrated**. Offering food at every meeting and celebration reinforces the tendency to eat because food is available, rather than for nutritional purposes. This can deliver mixed messages to employees who are also receiving messages about weight loss and sensible eating habits.

Environment

- **Improve employees' access to nutritious foods** by working with outside food vendors, including on-site cafeterias and catering trucks, to ensure healthy options are available. Another low-cost method to improve eating habits is to replace the junk food in vending machines with healthy snacks, such as 100% fruit juice, healthy nuts, dried fruits, and low-fat popcorn. To encourage purchase of the low-fat options, consider reducing the cost on these items.
- **Provide information on healthy food options** for employees who don't stay at one worksite, such as truck drivers and construction workers.
- **Offer healthy alternatives** such as fresh fruit and vegetables at office meetings and in the coffee or lunch room. Also, provide healthy selections for off-site company-sponsored functions. Visit www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/prevent/guidelines.htm for guidelines for healthy meetings.
- **Organize a farmers market or garden market at your workplace** once or twice a week. This will help to improve employees' access to fresh fruits and vegetables by offering quality produce conveniently. If your organization is small, think about joining forces with nearby companies for this purpose. A toolkit on how to plan, promote, and implement a garden market at your workplace is available at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/gardenmarket/index.htm.

Community Resources for Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

- Contact your local American Cancer Society or call 800-ACS-2345 for information about the Meeting Well program and to get the program at your workplace.
- Contact your Department of Parks and Recreation or YMCA/YWCA for community physical activity resources.
- Locate information on local nutrition programs by contacting your county extension service or hospitals in the area.

Your Role in the Community

Programs and services in your community can help support the actions you are taking at your workplace to prevent disease and promote the health of employees, their dependents, and retirees. Listed below are the steps communities can take to support health that have been shown to be effective. To the extent possible support these policies, programs, and services in your community to help ensure the health of your workforce.

Tobacco use in the community is reduced through:

- Establishing tobacco-free policies.
- Implementing educational mass media campaigns to prevent the initiation of tobacco use and encourage tobacco users to quit.
- Increasing taxes on tobacco products.
- Reducing out-of-pocket costs for effective tobacco-use treatments.
- Providing telephone quitline coaching to help tobacco users quit.

Cancer screening and early detection can be promoted through:

- Educating the public about recommended breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening tests.
- Providing incentives and reminders for individuals to get appropriate cancer screening tests.
- Reducing out-of-pocket costs for screening examinations.

Physical activity can be promoted through:

- Enhancing school physical education programs.
- Establishing walking groups and other recreational activities to provide social support for physical activity.
- Improving or developing places for physical activity such as trails, play areas, pools, bike paths, etc.

Employers can be leaders for making the community a healthy place to live and work.

Resources

Workforce Health Resources

ENACT
http://preventioninstitute.org/sa/enact/workplace/index.php?12ec2569db52ec97b4274dbe0e7b67cd
Provides assessment for workplaces on health promotion activities

Healthy Workforce 2010
http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/Healthy_Workforce_2010.pdf
Aids employers in implementing health promotion practices

Healthier Worksite Initiative
http://www.cdc.gov/hwi
Provides toolkits, policy information, and access to other worksite toolkits on nutrition and physical activity

Leading by Example
www.prevent.org/lbe
Provides the business case for investing in health

Purchaser's Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage
http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/benefitstopics/topics/purchasers/fullguide.pdf
Model benefit information for health plan coverage

Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA)
http://www.welcoa.org
Offers free reports, information, and tools on employee health for businesses of all sizes

Tobacco Control and Cessation Resources

A Practical Guide to Working with Health-Care Systems on Tobacco-Use Treatment
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/00_pdfs/Toolkit.pdf
A guide that includes information for purchasers on how to work with healthcare systems when purchasing benefits

Employee Needs Assessment: Smoking Cessation in the Workplace
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/alt_formats/hecs-sesc/pdf/pubs/tobac-tabac/cessation-renoncement/cessation-renoncement-eng.pdf
A sample needs assessment to help you determine what tobacco-use treatment services your employees may prefer

Employers' Smoking Cessation Guide: Practical Approaches to a Costly Workplace Problem
http://www.endsmoking.org/resources/employersguide/pdf/employersguide-2nd-edition.pdf
Offers information on the "whys" and "how-tos" of implementing tobacco cessation programs

Healthcare Provider Reminder Systems, Provider Education, and Patient Education: Working with Healthcare Delivery Systems to Improve the Delivery of Tobacco-Use Treatment to Patients—An Action Guide
*http://*www.prevent.org/actionguides/Tobacco-UseTreatment.pdf
Guides public health professionals on how to improve the delivery of tobacco-use treatment in healthcare systems

Making the Business Case for Smoking Cessation
http://www.businesscaseroi.org/roi/default.aspx
Calculate your company's return on investment (ROI) for investing in tobacco control services from one to five years

Spit Tobacco: A Guide for Quitting
http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/NR/rdonlyres/DF314871-B0A6-4171-B831-C472F543C154/0/SpitTobacco.pdf
Educational brochure for employees on how to quit chewing tobacco

The National Partnership for Smoke-Free Families
http://www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org/
National program to help pregnant smokers quit

Tobacco Cessation Counseling
http://www.smokefree.gov
Connect with trained tobacco cessation counselors

Benefit design:

Covering Smoking Cessation as a Health Benefit: A Case for Employers
http://www.americanlegacy.org/PDFPublications/Milliman_report_ALF_-_3.15.07.pdf
Highlights the cost advantages of employer-sponsored smoking cessation benefits

Make it Your Business: Insure a Tobacco-Free Workplace, Employer's Toolkit
http://www.tobaccofreeoregon.org/documents/finaltool_kit_document_001.pdf
How to provide appropriate tobacco-use treatment support to motivate and sustain quit rates

Quitlines:

American Cancer Society Quitline
http://www.yesquit.com/index.htm
Telephone-based support and education
(Can also call 1-877-YES-QUIT)

Free & Clear
http://www.freeclear.com/services/tobacco_cessation/employer/how_help.aspx?nav_section=1
Offers evidence-based tobacco-use treatment services, including quitlines

Linking a Network: Integrating Quitlines with Health Care Systems
http://www.tcln.org/cessation/pdfs/7a.Linkingrev6-29-05web.pdf
An integrative approach to linking quitline services with healthcare networks

Mayo Clinic Tobacco Quitline
http://www.mayoclinic.org/ndc-rst/quitline.html
Provides evidence-based, physician-supervised tobacco-use treatment services, including quitline support

National Jewish Medical & Research Center Quitline
http://www.nationaljewish.org/research/med-library/resources/quit.aspx
Directs individuals to tobacco-use treatment resources (including quitlines) for multiple types of tobacco use

North American Quitline Consortium
http://www.naquitline.org/index.asp?dbsection=map&dbid=1
Provides contact information for all state quitlines, fact sheets and other information

Telephone Quitlines: A Resource for Development, Implementation, and Evaluation
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/quitlines/00_pdfs/FinalQuitlines.pdf
A resource on developing your own quitline

Tobacco-free policies:

A Legal Review on Tobacco-Free Policies
http://www.otpf.org/uploadedFiles/forbusiness/Bro4%20Legal%20v5.pdf
A brochure to understand how to adopt an appropriate and lawful policy for your workplace

Going Smokefree in Your Workplace
http://www.no-smoke.org/goingsmokefree.php?id=103
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights provides information and tools to help you in your effort to pass a tobacco-free policy

Making Your Workplace Smokefree
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/tobacco/index.htm
Provides information on planning and implementation of tobacco-free policies in the workplace

Save Lives, Save Money: Make Your Business Smoke-Free
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/secondhand_smoke/00_pdfs/save_lives_save_money.pdf
Provides implementation guidance on workplace tobacco-free polices and provides the business value for investing in them

Secondhand Smoke Fact Sheet
http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/ETS
Questions and answers about secondhand smoke from the National Cancer Institute

Toolkit for Implementing Smoke-Free Laws: Business Outreach
http://www.goingsmokefree.org/tools/business.html
Resources and materials to help your workplace go smoke-free

Cancer Screening and Early Detection Resources

American Cancer Society
http://www.cancer.org
Comprehensive information on cancer screening, early detection, and treatment

Cancer in the Workplace: Prevention, Detection and Support: Report of a Consultation with Business and Health Leaders
http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pdfs/cancerworkplace.pdf
A summary report discussing cancer-related issues at the workplace

Cancer Screening: Payer Cost/Benefit thru Employee Benefits Programs
http://www.cchangeprojects.org/MakingtheBusinessCase/pdf/Milliman%20Report%20on%20Cancer%20Screening.pdf
Presents the estimated costs and benefits of screening for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers

C-Change Making the Business Case Materials
http://www.c-changeprojects.org/MakingTheBusinessCase/
Presents a business case for cancer prevention and early detection, including position paper, fact sheets, and additional resources

Great American Health Check Employer Tool Kit
http://www.cancer.org/downloads/GAHC/GAHC_Employer_Tool_Kit.pdf
Tool kit for employers on cancer screening and early detection

National Cancer Institute
http://www.cancer.gov
Information on cancer screening, treatment options, research, and survivorship

Tools and Strategies to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates
http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/cancer/cancers/colon/resources/crc_insuranceguide/CRC_Manual.pdf
Worksite intervention begins on page 126 of the document

Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Resources

Aim for a Healthy Weight
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm
Offers an interactive menu planner, portion control information, and BMI calculator

Diabetes at Work
http://diabetesatwork.org/_files/acoem2004labordaychecklist.pdf
Checklist for controlling weight in the workplace

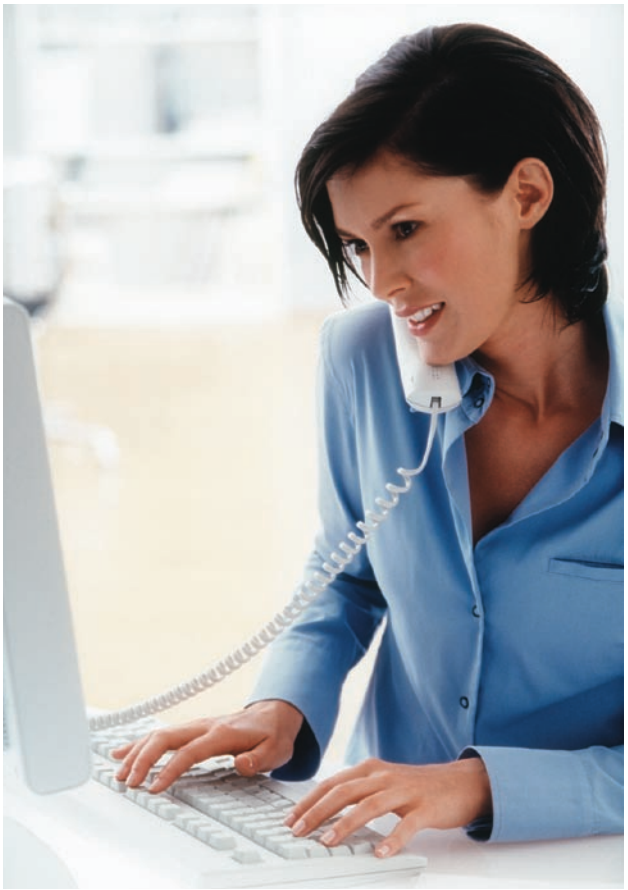
Healthy Weight, Healthy Lifestyles
http://www.wbgh.org/benefitstopics/topics/healthy/communicationtoolkit.cfm
Toolkits, best practices, and articles from the National Business Group on Health

Meeting Well
http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/content/Meeting_Well.asp
Guidelines for how to have a healthy meeting

StairWELL to Better Health Program
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/index.htm
Ideas on worksite stairwell interventions

Network for a Healthy California Worksite Program
http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite
Provides a fit business kit and a plan to take action at your workplace

Weight Control Information Network (WIN)
http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov
Nutrition, physical activity, and weight control publications, statistics, and information



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