

W

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Wellness

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Health



Mooove to Low Fat Dairy at Your Worksite!

Goal: To encourage adults to promote healthy low fat dairy products at their worksites.

Objectives:

Adults who follow these basic suggestions will:

- know the benefits of encouraging low fat and fat-free dairy products;
- demonstrate to their employers easy no-cost or low-cost tips for promoting the Mooove to Low Fat Dairy Campaign at their worksites.

Introduction

The Mooove to Low Fat Dairy manual contains excellent resources to help promote low fat and fat-free dairy products at your worksite. Many employees want to make healthy food choices but the demands from both family and work can frequently result in skipping breakfast, choosing highly sweetened foods and/or high fat foods.

Information You Can Share With Your Employer

Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey 2005 (BRFSS) indicates that 60.7 percent of Florida adults were overweight (37.9 percent) or obese (22.8 percent). Individuals who are obese are at increased risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis-related disabilities, and some cancers.

The estimated annual cost of obesity in the United States in the year 2000 was about \$117 billion. Obesity-related medical expenditures ranged from \$87 million in Wyoming to \$7.7 billion in California. In 2004, researchers reported that Florida's obesity-related medical expenditures exceeded \$3.9 billion and more than half of this cost was financed by Medicare and Medicaid.

Adults spend a large amount of time at the workplace. A worksite that supports healthy food choices can benefit both employees and employers. Escalating rates of obesity support the importance of creating employee wellness programs to make healthy choices easy for employees. There are many barriers that people face when trying to change their lifestyles to reduce their health risks. Employee wellness programs can reduce one barrier: limited availability of healthful food choices for employees.

Employers are learning that an investment in employee wellness programs can improve productivity and lower healthcare costs, while at the same time helping to address rising rates of obesity and related chronic diseases. By providing education and opportunities to incorporate healthier lifestyle choices during the work day employers help their employees and their bottom line.



Low Cost and No Cost Activities:

- Ensure that food vendors and/or vending machines located in the workplace include low fat or fat-free milk or other low fat dairy products such as yogurt. Display them prominently.
- Organize Lunch & Learn Events. Ask your local Extension office or county health department nutrition professional for assistance. Many dietitians welcome the opportunity to present information about meal planning and making healthy choices. These presentations can include tips on incorporating low fat and fat-free dairy into daily eating plans.
- Write an employee newsletter using the graphics and information contained in this manual. Highlight the benefits of low fat and fat-free dairy products.
- Post colorful posters of low fat and fat-free milk and other healthy beverages.
- Encourage nutritious choices in the cafeteria, break room, lounge, or at your desk through product placement and signage.
- Develop an informative payroll insert that describes the benefits of healthy dairy intake.
- During meetings or time spent waiting, use icebreakers that encourage attendees to share how much calcium they are consuming or how many servings of dairy they have consumed.
- Contact local grocery stores or the dairy industry for available discount coupons that employees can use to purchase low fat or fat-free dairy products.
- Be a role model by consuming healthy beverages in front of your co-workers.
- Ask management to acknowledge employees who make healthy choices.
- Create a bulletin board where employees can share healthy low fat or fat-free dairy recipes.

- Encourage those in charge to review the lists of beverages and food items served during meetings, events, and conferences. Help them (as appropriate) select healthy alternatives if high fat items are planned on the menu.
- Use ideas from the references and links in the next section, “Helpful Resources,” to create or enhance your worksite wellness promotions.

Helpful Resources:

Healthier Worksite Initiative

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/index.htm>

Milk Matters-Calcium Education Campaign

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/>

Choosing Foods and Beverages for Healthy Meetings, Conferences and Events

http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/policies/Healthy_Worksite_Food.pdf

Good Work Resource Kit

http://www.healthmainepartnerships.org/MCVHP/resource_good_work_manual.aspx

Wellness Councils of America (several free resources)

<http://www.welcoa.org>

National Dairy Council-Wellness Policies 101

www.nationaldairycouncil.org/NR/rdonlyres/AF948E33-1E95-48D5-9958-5416938C93AF/0/16FINALWellnessPolicy10184.PDF