

"Health is the greatest gift."
- Buddha

Healthy Holidays at Work

It is that time of year again. The time for holiday eats, baked goods, and other sweet treats. Most people, irrespective of culture or geographic location, celebrate the holidays with food and drink. Workplaces are no different. Every year, there are holiday parties, potlucks, and other occasions for eating. Let's not forget also the deluge of snacks that flood breakrooms and the heartier offering at the cafeteria.

Why Does This Matter?

The see-saw attempts to lose weight and regain one's health become even more challenging during the holidays. The primary reason is that the inducement to eat unhealthier foods is greater. This is why many adults gain one to five pounds during the holidays, with most never losing that weight after the holidays. Pledge this year to help your employees have a healthy holiday—even at work.

Healthy Office Treats

Promote a healthier workplace, even during the holiday season.

- Make meetings healthier by offering healthy snacks, water, and incorporating stretch breaks.



- Adopt a "[No Food Dumping Policy](#)" so employees don't leave unhealthy foods in break rooms and other community areas at the office.
- Change traditional holiday snacks to healthier ones: fruit bowls instead of candy dishes, yogurt parfaits instead of ice cream sundaes, whole-grain bagels instead of donuts.

The Holiday Party

If your company is planning a holiday party, you can make it a healthy and fun occasion. Here are some ideas:

- Encourage employees to bring healthy dishes. This way, they can eat things they know are healthy.
- Caterers and employees can modify traditional recipes to make them a little healthier. Go to <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/pubs/fdns/FDNS-E-63a.pdf>.
- Make sure that healthy options are

available. This includes salads, low-fat and low-sodium dishes, and vegetarian entrees.

- Serve healthy appetizers like a vegetable platter.
- Instead of a cake wheel or desert table, consider a make-your-own parfait or fruit salad bar.
- Replace ice cream with frozen yogurt as a desert option.
- Use smaller plates and bowls so guests do not "over-serve" and overeat.
- Instead of a traditional sit-down-and-eat restaurant, consider a food and game location for your holiday party.

Also consider incorporating fun games and activities into holiday parties. Not only will this build camaraderie, but it will also burn calories. Try any of the following:

- Candy cane relay race
- A classic game of musical chairs
- Conga line and other group dances.

Gift Ideas

Whether for gift exchange, Secret Santa, or employee recognition, you can make the holidays a little healthier through gift-giving. Consider food items

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WELLNESS WATCH

Bombarded with solicitations and promises from wellness program vendors, many companies have faced challenges identifying what would work best for their employees and the company overall. There is now a solution: Comprehensive Wellness Accreditation. URAC has announced accreditation standards within five categories: assessment, interventions, evaluation, integration, measurement. These standards will cover various components of wellness programs, including health risk assessments, health coaching, education, and clinical and financial outcomes. Formerly known as the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission, URAC is an independent, nonprofit organization that promotes healthcare quality through accreditation and certification.

Healthy Holidays at Work

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that are healthier, or items that can encourage physical activity, or reduce stress.

- Fruit basket
- Fruit preserves (the no or low sugar variety)
- Spa basket with lotions and aromatherapy candles
- Golf balls, tees, and gloves
- Fishing lures and lines, or map of local fishing locations
- Gardening gloves, pruning shears, or gift card to local gardening store
- Fitness bands, yoga mats, exercise balls
- Gift cards to sporting goods stores
- Membership to local gym

Maintain, Don't Gain

One way to make the holiday season healthier for employees is to help them minimize weight gain. [Maintain, Don't Gain](http://www.fitcitychallenge.org/Challenge/november/) is a challenge that provides tips and resources to employees to help them minimize weight gain during the holidays. For more information, go to <http://www.fitcitychallenge.org/Challenge/november/>.

Beyond the Holidays

Many of us look forward to the holidays with great excitement and anticipation. We plan parties, drive around town shopping for gifts, and even spend hours decorating trees, halls, and offices.

Rarely do we ever think about our health life beyond the holidays. Those who do think about it ponder on what their New Year's resolutions should be—how many pounds they want to lose, what habits they want to quit, how they are going to improve their health.

Even before January arrives, consider what your company can do to help employees live healthier, more productive lives in the new year.

- Plan for and organize employee walking groups.
- Offer tobacco cessation classes onsite or refer employees to local tobacco cessation programs.
- Start a healthy employees bulletin to share information, announce activities, and even showcase



employees that are modeling healthy lifestyles

- Add healthy messages to payroll stubs; you can even feature a health observance
- Plan for and organize a health screening event for employees.

A Healthy Company Year-Round

Did you ever wonder how to make your company a healthy company and not just a company that does healthy things—periodically? There are three areas to examine where you can make changes to set your whole company on a path to wellness.

- *Company culture.* Let employees know that you are serious about their health. Small changes to institute a healthy culture include installing a water cooler, having walking meetings, and switching out candy dishes for fruit bowls.
- *Policies.* Examples of policies that can help guide healthy behavior for employees (and visitors) include tobacco-free policies, wellness break policies, and healthy vending policies.
- *Environmental supports.* Ways that your work environment can lend themselves to a healthier workforce include designated walking trail/path, installation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), and salad bar in the cafeteria.

The holidays are a time to eat, spend time with others, and share. Endeavor to make your company holiday a healthy one this year.

Happy Holidays



Healthy New Year

Health Observance



December

World AIDS Day (December 1)
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<http://www.unaids.org/en/Partnerships/Advocacy+partners/WAC/default.asp>

National Aplastic Anemia & MDS Awareness Week (Dec 1-7)
Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation, Inc.
<http://www.aamds.org/>

National Handwashing Week (Dec 7-13)
Henry the Hand Foundation
<http://www.henrythehand.com/>

January

Cervical Health Awareness Month
National Cervical Cancer Coalition
<http://www.nccc-online.org/awareness.html>

Glaucoma Awareness Month
Prevent Blindness America
<http://preventblindness.org/news/observe.html>

National Birth Defects Prevention Month
March of Dimes
http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1206.asp

Thyroid Awareness Month
NBCAM Board of Sponsors
www.thyroidawareness.com

National Dental Hygiene Month
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
<http://www.thyroidawareness.com/>

February

National Wear Red Day (February 6)
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth>

AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month
Prevent Blindness America
<http://www.preventblindness.org/>

American Heart Month
American Heart Association
<http://www.americanheart.org/>

National Cancer Prevention Month
M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
<http://www.mdanderson.org/>

National Children's Dental Health Month
American Dental Association
<http://www.ada.org/goto/ncdhm>

National Wise Health Consumer Month
American Institute for Preventive Medicine
www.healthylife.com

National Women's Healthy Heart Campaign
Sister to Sister Foundation
<http://www.sistertosister.org/>



RESOURCE CORNER

OTHER GEORGIA PROGRAMS

Drugs Don't Work in Georgia

Drugs Don't Work in Georgia is a federally-funded statewide drug-free workplace program. It is an affiliate program of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Georgia Division of Public Health, the Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation, and local chambers of commerce.

Employers certified as having a drug-free workplace can receive a 7.5% discount on their workers' compensation premiums.

For more information, go to <http://www.ddwga.org/> or call 404-223-2277.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines

The US Department of Health and Human Services recently released its first physical activity guidelines. The new guidelines recommend at least 2 ½ hours every week of moderate-intensity physical activity for adults. For more information, visit

<http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/>

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/default.aspx>.

Be Active Your Way

<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/adultguide/default.aspx>.

2008 Physical activity Guidelines for Americans Toolkit

<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/toolkit.aspx>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Health Benefits Conference & Expo

February 3-4, 2009 · Tampa, FL

<http://www.hbce.com/index.html>

IBI/NBCH 2009 Health & Productivity Forum

February 9-11, 2009 · Los Angeles, CA

<https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?eventid=603114>

20th National Conference on Chronic Disease

Prevention & Control

February 23-25, 2009 · National Harbor, MD.

[http://www.team-](http://www.team-psa.com/chronic2009/main.asp)

[psa.com/chronic2009/main.asp](http://www.team-psa.com/chronic2009/main.asp)

Ninth Population Health and Disease

Management Colloquium

March 2-4, 2009 · Philadelphia, PA

<http://www.dmconferences.com/>

Art & Science of Health Promotion Conference

March 16-19, 2009 · San Francisco, CA

<http://www.healthpromotionconference.org>

Applied Ergonomics Conference & Expo 2009

March 23-26, 2009 · Reno, NV

<http://www.iienet2.org/Erqo/Conference/default.aspx>

WORKSITE WELLNESS IN THE NEWS

[Staff fitness is a weighty problem](#) - Financial Times, September 13, 2008

[I Put In 5 Miles at the Office](#) - NY Times, September 18, 2008

[Health insurance premium Holy Grail involves managing chronic conditions](#) - Financial Times, September 24, 2008

[Survey: Workers' family health-care deductibles jump 29%](#) - USA Today, September 24, 2008

[Employers face higher bills for health benefits](#) - Financial Times, October 1, 2008

[How To Keep Morale High When Business Is Down](#) - Forbes, October 16, 2008

[Most health workers skip flu shot](#) - USA Today, October 16, 2008

[Fewer Americans Getting Health Insurance Via Work](#) - Forbes, October 17, 2008

[Are You Paying Too Much For Health Insurance?](#) - Forbes, October 22, 2008

[US employers offer and value wellness programs](#) - Reuters, October 22, 2008

[Is Your Office Making You Sick?](#) - Forbes, October 27, 2008

[Johnson & Johnson Buys Online Health Coach HealthMedia](#) - Reuters, October 29, 2008

[Employees favor breastfeeding-friendly policies](#) - Reuters, October 31, 2008

[How To Tackle Downturn-Related Depression](#) - Forbes, October 30, 2008

[Flexible working must be respected](#) - Financial Times, November 1, 2008

[Holiday Health-Plan Shopping Guide](#) - Forbes, November 6, 2008

[What You'll Save By Quitting Smoking](#) - Forbes, November 12, 2008

[Employers Offer Workers Fewer Health Care Plans](#) - NY Times, November 15, 2008

[Gyms, spas stress value of fighting stress in hard times](#) - USA Today, November 16, 2008



Georgia's Worksite Health Initiative
Georgia DHR - Div. of Public Health
www.health.state.ga.us/programs/worksitehealth
WorksiteHealth@dhr.state.ga.us