

35% of Canadians are not getting enough exercise to improve their health.

Physical inactivity is one of the more serious health issues facing Canadians today.

Worksite activity programs can increase individual physical levels and improve employee morale.

wellness @work

For more details or resources, contact the
Thunder Bay District Health Unit at
625-5900 or toll free
1-888-294-6630

*Other Pamphlets in the
wellness@work series:
Healthy Eating @ work
Smoke Free @ work
Healthy Pregnancy @ work
Breastfeeding Friendly @ work
Substance Abuse @ work*



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*physical
activity*

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Why the workplace?

- Improves the overall quality of work life
- Improves concentration and productivity
- Provides opportunities for people to socialize in healthy ways
- Reinforces the company's commitment to its most valuable asset - its employees
- Helps to control health-related costs (the annual health costs for diseases linked to physical inactivity are estimated to be \$2.5 billion)
- Reduces absenteeism rates

Employee Active Tips:

- Walk or cycle to work.
- Take a scenic walk during your lunch break.
- Walk up the stairs.
- Enroll in a fitness program.
- Try yoga at your workstation.
- Take a stretch break and drink a glass of water on your break.
- Keep an extra pair of runners under your desk.
- Swim some laps at the local pool; play a running game.
- Be moderately active just 30 minutes a day, most days of the week!

Some tips for starting a workplace walking club:

- Walking is easy and inexpensive.
- Talk it up—use voice mail, e-mail and posters to get employees interested.
- Ask friends and co-workers to join you.
- Promote a noon-hour walking group—plan a 20 minute walking route.
- Offer incentives such as prizes or certificates of recognition.
- Hold a contest or challenge between departments.
- Plan short, indoor routes than can be used on rainy days.
- Wear the proper shoes and non-restrictive clothing.
- Be sun safe all year long—hats, sunglasses, sunscreen.
- Promotion is important to ensure the success of your program.

Put safety first when you are active:

- Talk to your doctor first.
- Wear a helmet when you ride your bike or use in-line skates.
- Drink lots of water before and after you exercise.
- Start slowly, build to a peak, cool down.
- Exercise with a buddy.



Physical Activity Resources for Worksites:

- Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living
- Walking: The Activity of a Lifetime
- Walk this Way—a self-help program

Websites:

- Active Ontario Website
www.activeontario.org

People are more interested in nutrition than ever and want to make healthier food choices.

As an employer, you can make the choices easier and contribute to employees' good health.



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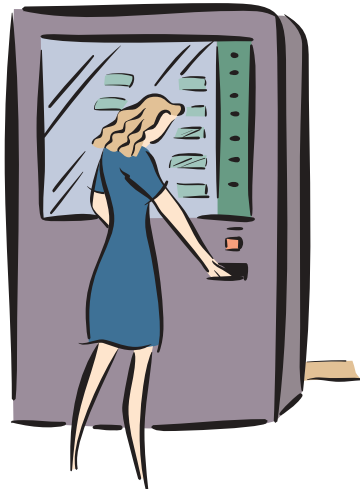
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*healthy
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Easy ways to provide healthier food choices at your workplace:

- Stock vending machines with healthy choices such as 100% juice drinks, chocolate milk, pretzels, peanuts, cereal bars, soup, fruit, yogurt or sandwiches.
- Provide a microwave in your lunch room to allow employees to bring food from home and socialize at meals.
- If you have a cafeteria, offer broth-based soup instead of cream soup; low-fat salad dressings and entrees; and sandwiches made with whole grain breads.
- Provide nutrition information through newsletters, “lunch and learn” sessions, displays or contests.



At meetings, keep the food light and the energy high:

- Serving tasty, low-fat foods will help everyone “refuel” and boost energy levels.
- Offer bagels, low-fat muffins or breads and fruit at your morning meetings. Skip the donuts or croissants.
- Offer lettuce, tomatoes or mustard to add to sandwiches rather than mayo, butter or margarine. Make sandwiches with a variety of whole grain breads or buns.
- Provide ice water and juices along with coffee and tea; offer 2% milk as an alternative to cream.

Healthy Eating Tips for Employees:

- On the road, instead of a large burger and fries, choose a turkey sandwich and salad, pizza with ham and veggies or small plain burgers. Snack on juice, cheese and crackers, bagels, baby carrots or fruit.
- Long periods without meals can increase impulse eating so be sure to stock your desk or lunch room with handy snacks. When your schedule is hectic, graze on muffins, vegetable sticks, low-fat instant or canned soups, bagels and peanut butter or cream cheese, dried fruits, fig bars, crackers and cheese, hard cooked eggs, sandwiches, juice, whole grain muffins, cold cereal and milk.



Make packing a healthy lunch easy:

- Choose the main item (sandwich, leftovers or convenience food). Then add fruit or veggies and milk or yogurt to include foods from all four food groups.
- For sandwiches, vary your breads (bagel, tortilla, bun, pita), fillings (meat, egg, cheese, peanut butter) and spreads/toppings (cheese, veggies, salsa, mustard, chutney or light mayo).
- Keep lunch supplies together in a drawer, i.e. napkins, lunch bags or containers.
- Make sure lunch items are included on your weekly shopping list.

For more details or resources, contact Nutrition Services at 625-5900.

Did you know ...

- Each smoking employee represents \$2,560 in additional costs due to increased absenteeism, lost productivity, increased life insurance premiums and smoking area costs.*
- Smoking affects your bottom line: Even non-smokers, exposed to smoke at work are twice as likely to take time off.
- In 2000, 28% of Ontario's labour force smoked.
- 70% of all Canadian workers work in the service industry and 37% of these workers smoke.
- \$1 invested in staff quitting smoking gives \$5 back to your company.

**Conference Board of Canada, 1997*

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*smoke
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If you're a smoker, what can you do to quit?

- The danger is real. One out of two smokers die prematurely. One half of these deaths occur before retirement age, losing an average of 22 years of life.
- Quitting takes practice. We learn how to become a non-smoker by having a relapse.
- Most of us need 4 to 6 serious quit attempts over two years to break free.
- Ask for help. Quit Smoking booklets give proven techniques.
- Nicotine replacement—gum or patch—doubles your success.
- See your Doctor about Zyban or join a group to more than double your chance of success.



As an Employer, what can you do to become smoke-free?

In Ontario, under the smoking in the workplace act, there is no obligation for a company to provide a smoking area. Want to change smoking policy in your company? The Thunder Bay District Health Unit can help—from your initial planning through your policy preparations and communicating the new policy to your staff. Give the Health Unit a call for practical, realistic advice that can work for employee health and your bottom line.



Resources

For smokers who want to quit

For smokers who don't want to quit

If you want to help a smoker quit:

Introduced in late 1999 by the Canadian Cancer Society, this “One step at a time” series is designed both for those smokers not thinking of quitting as well as someone who has already made the decision. The third brochure has practical hints for a support person. “One Step at a Time” presents a comprehensive series of suggestions and exercises that will lead a person through the cycle of quitting. Call 344-5433 or toll free 1-888-939-3333 for your free copy.

Get on Track

Available from the Lung Association. First released in 1995, the brochure uses the standard techniques of monitoring each cigarette used over a week or two. Then the smoker cuts down their over-all consumption, sets a quit date and does it.

How Not to Smoke

A program for women who want to quit smoking. A combination video and workbook that outlines a self-directed, quit smoking process.

Tips for combining work and breastfeeding:

- Take as much postpartum rest as possible.
- Establish breastfeeding before you return to work.
- Form a support group with other working women who breastfeed.
- Consider cooperative strategies such as sharing child-care.
- If you are away from your baby for several hours, express breastmilk and have the baby fed with a cup or spoon. The use of bottles or pacifiers discourages babies from breastfeeding.
- Practice expressing breastmilk before returning to work.
- Expressed breastmilk keeps well for 8 hours or more - milk expressed by a pump does not keep as well.
- Get plenty of rest, and eat extra food and drink to maintain your health. Your diet should be well-balanced and include lots of fruit and vegetables.

(adapted from Breastfeeding Rights of Working Women, 1998)



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breastfeeding friendly

@ work

Benefits for Children

- Breastfeeding meets children's nutritional and emotional needs.
- Breastfed children have stronger immune systems and are healthier than children who do not receive breastmilk.
- Breastfed babies have fewer ear and diarrheal infections. Also, breastfed infants have fewer illnesses and milder effects when illness does occur.

Benefits for Women

- Maintains a unique physical and emotional bond with their baby while working outside the home.
- Mothers often report a feeling of personal satisfaction and pleasure in the commitment they make to their baby and to their job.
- They have a reduced risk of developing osteoporosis, ovarian and premenopausal breast cancer in later life.



Benefits for Employer

- Employees who are breastfeeding will be more likely to return to work from maternity leave, thereby ensuring that the employer does not lose the valuable skills and experience of the employee.
- There is likely to be reduced absenteeism and staff turnover.
- Acknowledging the needs of employees who are breastfeeding will improve employer-employee relations.

(adapted from Nursing Mothers Association of Australia: Mother-Friendly Workplace Information Sheet, 1998)

Resources:

Expressing and Storing Breastmilk

Breastfeeding - Where to Find Help in Thunder Bay

These pamphlets are available at the Thunder Bay District health Unit.



How to become a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace

- Create policies which promote and support breastfeeding and the expression of breast milk by employees who are breastfeeding when they return to work. Policies should include:
 - management support by working with breastfeeding employees to determine mutually agreeable hours or work assignments and breaks which support breastfeeding practices.
 - provision of clean, comfortable and private space at or near the workplace for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk.
 - promotion of Workplace Breastfeeding Policy within the workplace.

(OPHA 1996, Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace)

Did you know?

- Abuse of alcohol and other drugs affects the lives of 74% of the people in Ontario and costs an estimated \$9.2 billion a year in health care, law enforcement and lost labour productivity. (*Community Health Status Report, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, 1995*)
- Drug abuse affects performance on the job. Research shows that certain drugs continue to affect the user for 24 hours after use.
- Many substance abusers are quite accomplished at masking their problems, e.g. it only takes a breath mint to cover up the smell of alcohol.
- Almost 275,000 serious abusers of alcohol and other drugs are currently employed by Ontario businesses.
(www.cleanandsober.com/corporate/addiction/high_cost.html)



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substance abuse

@ work

Know the Warning Signs:

- “No Show” or Late
- Erratic Performance
- Errors in Judgement
- Difficulties with Finances
- Unfit for Duty
- Frequent Accidents
- Dodging Responsibility
- Abrupt changes in mood or attitude
- Deterioration in personal appearance
- Increasingly strained relationship with colleagues



Major Health Risks Include:

- *Marijuana* - lung cancer, bronchitis
- *Cocaine* - stroke, heart attacks
- *Heroin* - mental disorder, death from respiratory collapse, infection, HIV/AIDS
- *Alcohol* - cirrhosis of the liver, cancer, heart disease, brain damage, impaired muscle coordination
- *Amphetamines* - stroke, mental disorder
- *Barbiturates* - death from respiratory collapse

DON'T

Supervisors Shouldn't:

- let person continue to work at a lower level than they should be
- let fear of exposing drug problem within company stop him/her from taking action
- let friendship with employee block reacting to the problem
- let problem slide until it becomes a major situation

Co-Workers Shouldn't:

- take over the work or responsibilities of the abuser
- let friendship get in the way of helping person toward recovery
- cover up for the abuser
- lend money to support the habit
- share in denial, telling person he/she doesn't have a problem

(adapted from Substance Abuse in the Workplace: Strung Out on the Job, W.R. Spence, M.D.)

DO

Supervisors Should:

- pay attention to the warning signs of abuse
- enforce company's policy against substance abuse
- take steps to help abusing employee
- require consistent work standards from every employee
- refuse to cover up for, or take excuses from the substance abuser

Co-Workers Should:

- talk to the substance abuser about concerns they have for his/her health, job, etc.
- refuse to cover up for, or take over the work for, an abuser
- talk it over with a supervisor if necessary.

(adapted from Substance Abuse in the Workplace: Strung Out on the Job, W.R. Spence, M.D.)

Resources

- *Substance Abuse Identification Kit*
- *The Sobering Consequences of Drug Abuse* - display that shows what actually happens to your body when you abuse drugs
- *Substance Abuse in the Workplace Flip Chart* - materials will make supervisors, co-workers and the abusers themselves

- more aware of the consequences of substance abuse at work
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Women in their reproductive years now make up almost half of all workers.

Eight out of ten women will become pregnant in their working life.



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*healthy
pregnancy
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Problems associated with working during pregnancy

- Certain types of work can increase the risk of low birth weight. This could include:
 - Standing for long periods and heavy work
 - More than 40 hours per week
 - High physical exertion
 - Stressful working environment
- Exposure to toxic substances is associated with low birth weight or birth defects

What's in it for the Employer?

Companies that have initiated pregnancy friendly workplace policies believe they are worthwhile and have the following advantages:

- Better prospects for healthy pregnancies and healthy babies
- Improved productivity
- Fewer absences during pregnancy
- Earlier return to work following child birth
- Less employee turnover
- Improved employee morale
- Healthier habits that may become permanent

Few employers recognize how simple and inexpensive changes in health policy can be. For example, a sign designating preferred parking for pregnant employees is almost cost free. It conveys a corporate value that

the organization cares about the employees and their families.

(Regional Niagara Public Health Department, 1999)

What can a pregnant woman do to decrease the risk to herself and her baby?

- Take responsibility to find out about her work environment
- Prevent exposure to dangerous substances:
 - Wash hands before eating
 - Avoid herbicides, pesticides and solvents such as paint thinners, aerosols and oven cleaners
- Continue to practice or adopt healthy lifestyle practices:
 - Eat well
 - Exercise
 - Do not smoke or take drugs
- Modify work habits if necessary:
 - Avoid heavy lifting and standing for long periods
 - Request extra rest periods as needed
 - Discuss work reassignment if at risk for low birth weight or birth defects

(adapted from Ottawa-Carleton Health Dept, 1993)

Anyone who is pregnant or works with a pregnant woman, should know the signs and symptoms of preterm labour. If a pregnant woman has any of these symptoms, she should go immediately to hospital or call hospital for information:

- Bad cramps or stomach pains that don't go away
- Bleeding, trickle or gush of fluid from vagina
- Increase in the amount of vaginal discharge
- Lower back pain/pressure, or a change in lower backache
- A feeling that the baby is pushing down
- Fever, chills, dizziness, vomiting or a bad headache
- Blurry vision or spots before their eyes
- Sudden or severe swelling of feet
- Contractions, or change in strength/number of contractions
- Significant change in baby's movement

