



## Workplace Wellness: Wellness Initiatives to Promote Healthy Weight

Wellness issues important to you – brought to you by the insurance specialists at Tailor Made Benefit Solutions

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is one of the best ways an individual can strive toward good overall health and avoid preventable medical problems. Help your employees with their weight loss goal with these activities and incentives.

### Activities and Programs

- Exercise class – There is no better way to shed pounds than to start exercising. A class designed especially for weight loss may attract the participants who need it most. Weight lifting and aerobic exercise both help burn calories and build muscles.
- Support groups – A weekly gathering for support and encouragement can motivate employees to stick with their weight loss program. Support groups can improve long-term outcomes, create a forum for sharing what works and what doesn't, and provide a place to generate motivation and celebrate successes.
- Scales – Place scales in the fitness room or bathroom. These will encourage people to be conscious of maintaining a healthy weight. Have monthly weigh-ins and reward employees who show progress in long-term weight loss.
- Healthy vending machines – Eliminate soda and candy from company vending machines. Replace sugary beverages with water, fruit juice and vegetable juice. Replace unhealthy snacks with pretzels, fresh fruit, low-fat popcorn and other nutritious options.
- Healthy lunch program – Whether you have an onsite cafeteria or simply cater the occasional lunch, be sure to provide healthy meals with fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat proteins and whole grains.

### Incentives

- Healthy gift basket. Give the gift of health with in-season fresh produce, a fruit and nut trail mix, whole wheat goodies and a cookbook for low-fat dinners.
- Personal trainer gift certificate. This highly desirable incentive will provide even fitness-phobic employees with one-on-one direction and encouragement. Personal trainers help individuals perform exercises safely and effectively.

- Nutritionist consultation. Many people want to lose weight but lack the tools and knowledge. A personal consultation with a nutritionist can customize calorie needs, meal plans and dietary requirements to help each employee maximize health and weight loss.
- Reduced health care cost. Employees who lose weight will dramatically cut their health risks and their need for future health care. Your company can reward them with discounts on health care premiums.
- Health day. Reward program participants with a “health day.” These are the opposite of a typical sick day because they give a paid day off to employees who have shown healthy behavior or participated in a wellness event.
- New clothing reimbursement. Did an employee move down a clothing size or two due to weight loss? Reward the employee by reimbursing him or her for a new work outfit (for companies on a small budget) or a whole new wardrobe (for companies with a larger budget). You’ll be amazed how motivating this incentive is to those who want to slim down!

*This article is not intended to be exhaustive nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as legal advice. Readers should contact legal counsel for legal advice.*