



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

WORKPLACE HEALTH

Promote Healthy Eating

March is Nutrition month and a great opportunity to take a closer look at the food selections available in the workplace. Vending machines can be a convenient way for employees to grab a quick snack or meal when needed. However, workplace vending machines often provide snacks high in sugar, fat and/or salt and offerings of little nutritional value. Since many Canadian adults spend a large portion of their day at the workplace, employers can play a key role in promoting healthy eating. One way to do this is to offer healthier vending machine options.



Healthy vending machine suggestions

Beverages

- Water
- 2%, 1%, skim milk and chocolate milk
- 100% fruit juice
- Vegetable juice
- Diet soft drinks

- Dried fruit
- Trail mix
- Cereal boxes
- Healthy soup or chili in a cup

Non-refrigerated food

- Whole grain crackers
- Pretzels
- Canned fruit
- Baked chips, soy crisps
- Cereal bars
- Fruit bars
- Low-fat cookies (e.g., fig newtons)
- Nuts, peanuts

Refrigerated food

- Fresh fruit cups
- Whole fruit
- Vegetable sticks
- Salads with low-fat dressing on the side
- Low-fat cheese
- Yogurt
- Sandwiches made with whole-grain bread and lean meat

Adapted with permission from Nutrition Services, York Region Health Services Department, 2006



Julia Hartley
Health Promoter
Workplace Health Program
519.426.6170 Ext. 3248
julia.hartley@hnhu.org

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Considering a Work/Life Balance Program

What are work/life balance initiatives?

Simply put, work/life balance initiatives are any benefits, policies or programs that help create a better balance between the demands of the job and the healthy management (and enjoyment) of life outside work.

Work/life initiatives can potentially deal with a wide range of issues including:

- Addressing family care needs.
 - on-site childcare
 - emergency childcare assistance
 - seasonal childcare programs (such as March break or Christmas)
 - elder-care initiatives
 - referral program to care services, local organizations, etc.
- Flexible working arrangements.
 - family leave policies
 - other leaves of absence policies such as educational leave, community service leaves, self funded leave or sabbaticals
- Employee assistance programs.
 - on-site seminars and workshops (on such topics as stress, nutrition,

smoking, communication etc.)

- internal and/or external educational or training opportunities
- fitness facilities or fitness membership assistance (financial)

What are the benefits to a workplace that implements a work/life balance program?

- Attracts new employees.
- Helps retain staff.
- Builds diversity in skills and personnel.
- Improves morale.
- Reduces sickness and absenteeism.
- Enhances working relationships between colleagues.
- Encourages employees to show more initiative and teamwork.
- Increases levels of production and satisfaction.



- Decreases stress and burn-out.

Adapted from: Workplace Health and Wellness Guide, CCOHS, 2008. (Reproduced with the permission of CCOHS, 2009)

What are some steps to take when setting up a work/life balance program?

When starting, it is best to appoint an individual or in some cases, form a joint work/life committee. To research needs and to implement the program, suggested steps to take are as follows:

1. Assess the workplace's current situation and objectives.
 - Survey employees, supervisors, and managers.
 - Ask about needs, concerns, etc. Find out about bottom line or underlying concerns (e.g., employees report not being able to cope with workplace stress. What is the true source of this stress?).
2. Get buy-in from all levels.
 - Educate all members of the company about the benefits and challenges of introducing these programs.
 - Be clear on the intentions and goals of the program.
 - Provide any necessary training and/or education to help these address concerns.
 - Address misconceptions that people should keep their personal lives at home and that being present equals being productive, etc.
3. Be clear how hours, productivity and deadlines will be monitored.
 - Address fears and apprehension expressed by both employees and managers.
4. Create a policy or guideline:
 - Be sure that workload issues are resolved and set realistic targets.
 - Clearly state its use and purpose.
 - Be clear about the impact on vacation time, compensation and other benefits, if any.
5. Initiate a trial period and/or pilot studies.
6. Monitor, re-survey, and make any adjustments that are necessary.

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Balancing Work and Family

You've Got the Power

Do you sometimes feel you would need 25 hours in the day to get everything done? Balancing work and family life can be very challenging. Having a good work/family balance means you are able to manage the stress at work as well as the stress at home without feeling overwhelmed. If you hear yourself saying, "The kids are involved in so many activities after school that there is hardly enough time to sit down and eat dinner together," it may be time to take back control of your life and get back to a healthier, balanced life. Creating balance in your life can improve your morale, energy level, personal relationships and mental state.

Family balance is as important as having a healthy work balance. If there is an imbalance in your life, all areas may be affected. Here are some simple ideas to get you back in balance:

- Get at least eight hours of sleep at night.
- Set aside time for yourself.
- Have dinner as a family.
- Take care of your body by being physically active and eating right.
- Set priorities.

Studies show that setting aside time to have family meals encourages healthier eating and better communication within the family. Here a few tips to try:

- Get the whole family to help; children can help prepare supper too.
- During dinner the family can share their day's experiences.
- Let your family know ahead of time that dinner will be eaten together.



Remember, there are many things a family can do together. Time together doesn't have to cost a lot. Ideas can include:

- Go for a walk or bike ride.
- Play a board game.
- Have a game of hide-and-go-seek .
- Play outdoor sports.

It is important to create a home/work balance. We become good role models for our children when we find ourselves in balance and able to manage our parental responsibilities. Being in balance allows us to be good partners to our spouses, to our neighbours and especially be nice to ourselves. If we lack sleep or have an argument with our child our life becomes unbalanced and all aspects of our life can be affected. When we lead a less hectic and chaotic life we can function much more clearly and effectively.

A balanced family is a happy family.

*Written by Sabine Murphy, Public Health Nurse,
Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit.*



Goodbye from Erin

Thank you all for the support, guidance and encouragement you have provided me over the last two years. Although I will miss you all and this position, I am looking forward to a new challenge and to starting a new phase of my career. I am pleased to introduce Julia Hartley as your new Workplace Health Promoter.

Erin Bellchamber



Hello from Julia

I am excited to meet with all of the workplace partners and look forward to working with you in the next few months as I get settled in my new position in workplace health. I have lots of exciting ideas and I look forward to making 2009 a healthy workplace year.

Julia Hartley



The Driven to Quit Challenge is back for 2009!

The Canadian Cancer Society and Public Health Units across Ontario launched the Driven to Quit Challenge on January 21. This campaign is designed to encourage Ontario adults who are daily smokers to make a quit attempt, use available resources and supports and embrace a healthier lifestyle through the related health gains that come with being tobacco free. Participants will be entered in a draw to win one of many exciting prizes!

Thanks to the generous support of McNeil Consumer Healthcare, the official prize

sponsor of the 2009 Challenge, the prize pool has been expanded and will have additional prize incentives. The grand prize this year is a Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid. Other prizes include two \$5,000 vacations and seven \$2,000 Canadian Tire Gift Cards. "Buddies" who help someone quit are also eligible to win Canadian Tire gift cards.

To register, or for more information, visit www.driventoquit.ca or call the Canadian Cancer Society Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333. Registration deadline is Feb. 28.

New Ontario Law Protects Children from Second-Hand Smoke in Motor Vehicles



As of Jan. 21, 2009, the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act 2008 will prohibit individuals from smoking tobacco products inside a motor vehicle if anyone under the age of 16 years is present. This new law will be punishable with a set fine of \$250, enforced by police officers. The new law is designed to protect children from the harmful health effects caused of exposure to second-hand smoke in motor vehicles, which can be up to 27 times greater than in a home where smoking is permitted. Children are especially vulnerable to second-hand smoke because they breathe more air relative to body weight. As a result, they absorb more tobacco smoke toxins than adults. Children who breathe second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer health problems such as sudden infant death syndrome, asthma cancer and cardiac disease later in life. For more information please call the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 Ext. 3248.

COMING EVENT

What:

Workplace Health Networking Breakfast on the Process of Retirement: Planning and Coping



When:

Feb. 18, 2009
8 to 9:30 a.m.
(Continental breakfast provided.)

Where:

The Greens at Renton
969 Concession 14, RR 4, Simcoe

Contact:

R.S.V.P. Josh Daley
519-426-6170 Ext. 3208
josh.daley@hnhu.org