

Penticton Workplace Wellness Network Newsletter July and August 2009



Healthy Workplaces make Healthier Communities

Workplaces have the ability to make communities healthier. In this sense, the workplace has a dual role, both as an organization within a community and as a community itself.

As a community organization, the workplace can implement policies and practices that positively impact and sustain the health of the environment that surrounds them. As a community itself, the workplace can create policies and environments that support employees in adopting healthy behaviours. The very best part is that healthier workplaces have healthier fiscal bottom lines, and decreased benefit costs¹.

Here are some examples of how to create healthier communities for employees and surrounding neighbourhood environments.

Create healthier employees

Providing health and wellness programs is a great way to influence both the health of workers and the organization. Here are some cost efficient ways to promote health and wellness in your workplace:

- Provide flexible hours so employees can access physical activity opportunities and address responsibilities external to work.
- Create opportunities that encourage physical activity such as promoting walking and pedometer challenge programs. Studies show that having a physical activity program in the workplace can attract quality employees and can reduce absenteeism by up to 70 per cent².
- Develop policies to protect employees from exposure to ultraviolet radiation, tobacco smoke and workplace hazards. Provide protective equipment to employees as needed and promote the use of safety equipment for leisure activities. Bicycle helmets for cycling is one example.
- Provide policies that promote access to healthy food choices in vending machines and cafeterias. Offer healthy snacks at meetings.
- Create a wellness committee and engage employees in identifying and addressing learning needs related to employment and health.

Create healthier environments

Protecting our environment and conserving our natural resources is more important now than ever before. A workplace has an important role to play in protecting and enhancing the health of the environment in which they reside. Help to create a more sustainable community by considering the following:

- Be as environmentally friendly as possible in your workplace. Reduce emissions, print double-sided and recycle; turn off lights and computers when not needed. This is good for the environment and cuts operating costs too!
- Promote Smart Commuting options. Install a bike rack at your workplace to encourage active transportation and support carpooling, transit use and tele-working.
- "Green" your company property. Add trees for shade and environmental benefits and make the area a nice place to take a walk or break
- Consider the environment when planning events or meetings. For example, provide access to shade, use jugs of tap water instead of bottled and choose non-disposable dishes.

¹ The Health Communication Unit, 2003

² Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2005

Adapted from York Region Community and Health Services.

Fresh Summer Smoothie Recipe

- 2 large bananas, thickly sliced
- 1 can (398 ml) peach halves in natural juice or 2 large fresh peaches
- 200 g plain low-fat acidophilus yogurt
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon clear honey
- 1 1/4 cups freshly squeezed orange juice
- sprigs of fresh mint to garnish (optional)

Directions:

Place the bananas, peaches and juice, yogurt, mint and honey in a food processor or blender and blend to a smooth purée, scraping down the sides of the container once or twice. Add the orange juice and blend briefly until mixed. Pour the smoothie into tall glasses and garnish with sprigs of mint, if desired.

Preparation time 10 minutes - Serves 4

Nutritional information

PER SERVING

- 173 calories
- 5 g protein
- 0.3 g total fat
- 0.1 g saturated fat
- 2 mg cholesterol
- 37 g total carbohydrate
- 33 g sugars
- 4 g fibre
- 47 mg sodium



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