



How Can Your Worksite Support Wellness?

Worksite wellness – a term that refers to opportunities that promote health, wellness and safety at work – is important for every occupation. When employee wellbeing is a priority, workplaces can see improved morale, productivity and retention. There are many ways that worksites can promote wellness. The Vermont Department of Health recommends activities in six areas – or core outcomes – for a healthy worksite.

Six Core Outcomes for Healthy Worksites

- ▶ **Promote healthy food options**
 - Model healthy eating behavior for kids. Consider family-style meals where teachers and children eat together.
 - Offer healthy choices at staff meetings and consider limiting unhealthy options.
 - Make water available in or near each classroom so teachers can easily access it.
 - Host an on-site cooking class for staff to learn healthy recipes that use affordable ingredients.
- ▶ **Go tobacco-free**
 - Provide information on cessation resources for parents and staff from 802Quits.org.
- ▶ **Help employees get 30 minutes of physical activity**
 - Provide simple fitness equipment in a staff area, such as exercise balls, free weights, stationary bikes and resistance bands, that teachers can use before and after work.
 - Start a walking group that meets before or after work to walk or wheelchair roll outdoors.
- ▶ **Become a breastfeeding-friendly employer**
 - Create organizational policies that support a woman's choice to breastfeed, including schedules that accommodate breastfeeding breaks and designated spaces for staff and parents to nurse or pump.
- ▶ **Promote preventative care**
 - Post flyers about the importance of flu vaccines, checkups, dental cleanings and screenings.
 - Offer a free healthy living workshop onsite – visit www.myhealthyvt.org for info.
 - Consider an onsite ergonomics consultation to help teachers adapt movements to prevent pain.
- ▶ **Support the emotional wellbeing of employees**
 - Consider offering a workshop on stress reduction activities.
 - Encourage teachers to participate in mindfulness activities with their classrooms.

For more strategies and resources on each core outcome, as well as tools for getting started with worksite wellness initiatives, visit www.healthvermont.gov/worksites-wellness

Tips for Early Child Care Educators: Staying Healthy on the Job





Vermont's early child care workers are dedicated to the care, education and development of our state's youngest children. When your work involves taking care of others, it can sometimes be easy to forget to take care of your own wellbeing. There are many small things you can do during the workday to stay healthy, prevent disease, and be a powerful role model for the children you work with.

Staying Healthy on the Job

Eat Healthy

Eating healthy, in addition to being physically active and not using tobacco, is one of the most important ways to reduce the risk of chronic disease. In Vermont, more people die from chronic disease than all other causes of death combined. Here are some ideas for eating healthy on the job:

- Make half your plate fruits or vegetables at every meal.
- Drink water or unsweetened beverages like iced tea or flavored seltzers instead of soda, energy drinks and sports drinks.
- Pack your own snacks – try fruits and vegetables, unsalted nuts, low-fat yogurt, air-popped popcorn or other healthier options.
- See if you qualify for programs that offer discounts on local produce – visit nofavt.org.

For more ideas, visit www.usda.gov/media/blog/2013/03/28/healthy-eating-budget.

Prevent or Manage Diabetes

Diabetes affects more than 55,000 Vermonters. Many more have prediabetes, which if left untreated, could develop into type 2 diabetes. Losing 5 to 7 percent of body weight reduces the risk of diabetes, as well as heart disease and other chronic conditions. Visit myhealthyvt.org for information on free diabetes prevention and management workshops in Vermont.

Get Annual Checkups, Cancer Screenings, and Regular Dental Cleanings

Regular checkups are important to preventing disease and helping to detect any problems early, leading to better outcomes. Most insurance plans cover these services at no cost. If you do not have insurance, there are low or no cost services available for many uninsured Vermonters through community health clinics and the Ladies First program. Call Vermont 211 (dial 2-1-1) to learn about resources in your area.

Prevent Joint Pain and Manage Stress

Working with small children is a demanding job. It can require lifting, stooping, and kneeling that can put stress on the joints and cause back pain. Regular physical activity can help alleviate or even prevent joint pain. It is also an effective way to manage stress. There are many fun activities that you can do with small children that help them get the required 60 minutes of physical activity per day and help you get exercise too! There are also some simple ways to adapt your movements to help prevent pain. Check out www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/Erg_ChildCare.pdf for some ideas.



Take Short Mindfulness Breaks

Take a minute to focus on taking deep breaths. Breathe in and out through your nose and feel the belly expand and contract. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your focus on your breathing. Also try attending a yoga class to learn some stretches you can do at home.

Check out the University of Vermont's Center for Health & Wellbeing for more guided mindfulness activities at uvm.edu/health/guided-mindfulness-exercises.