



Worksite Wellness for Food Service Professionals

Strategies for a Healthy Food Establishment

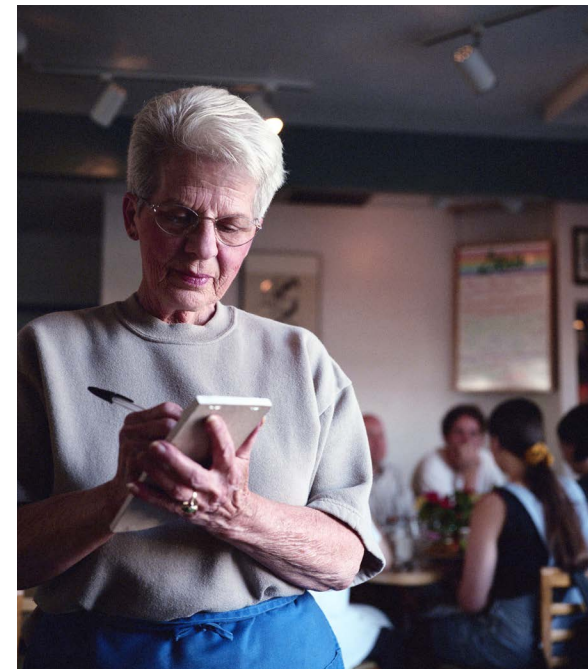
Worksite wellness – a term that refers to opportunities that promote health, wellness and safety at work – is important for every occupation. When employee wellbeing is a priority, workplaces can see improved morale, productivity and retention. There are many ways that worksites can promote wellness. 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**
 - Highlight healthy options available for staff during meal breaks. Encourage employees to participate with a contest to create a staff-only healthy meal option.
 - Make your worksite a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) drop-off.
- ▶ **Go tobacco-free**
 - Promote a tobacco-free workplace and provide information on free quit resources.
 - Create a staff team on the 802Quits.org online quit programs to help employees support each other.
 - Implement a tobacco-free policy in outdoor areas and near entryways.
- ▶ **Help employees get 30 minutes of physical activity**
 - Encourage employees to do some gentle exercises and stretches during short breaks or before the start of a shift.
 - Partner with nearby fitness studios and other area restaurants to provide discounts or fitness nights for food service professionals.
 - Create a team to walk, run or wheel a local 5K. Consider having the business sponsor the team as a promotional opportunity!
- ▶ **Become a breastfeeding-friendly employer**
 - Establish a designated breastfeeding space for staff. If space isn't available on-site, partner with area organizations that might be able to provide a space.
- ▶ **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.myhealthylvt.org for info.
- ▶ **Support the emotional wellbeing of employees**
 - Have a zero-tolerance policy for workplace bullying and harassment.
 - Create a workplace culture that takes the stigma out of mental health concerns and encourages employees to access support services and practice stress reduction activities.

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

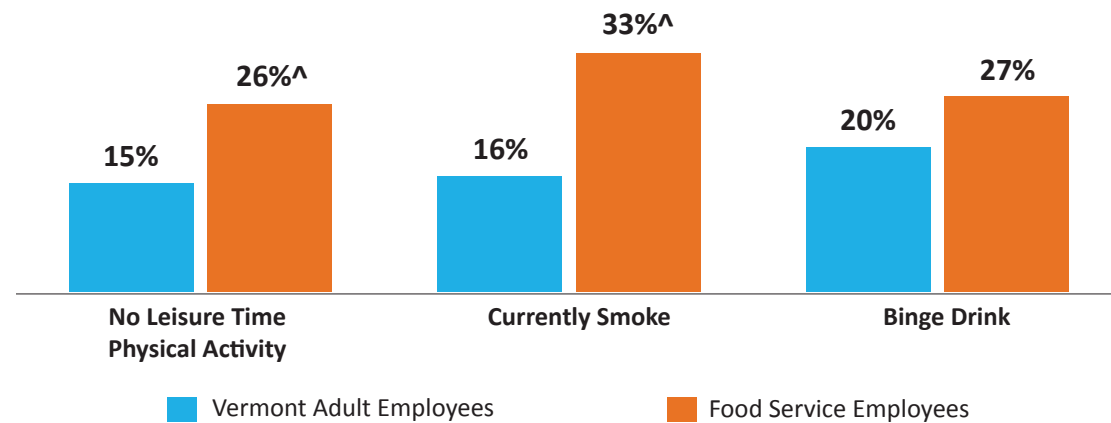
Tips for Food Service Professionals: Staying Healthy on the Job





Food service professionals are crucial to Vermont’s economy. They play an important role in creating a dining, drinking or entertainment experience for locals and visitors. Food service professionals work in a fast paced and demanding environment where being aware of health can be difficult, but still very important. Worksite wellness – a term that refers to opportunities that promote health, wellness, safety and wellbeing at work – is important to every occupation.

Food Service Professionals Have Higher Rates of Risk Factors for Chronic Disease



Data Source: BRFSS 2014
^ indicates statistical significance

Staying Healthy on the Job

Take breaks without smoking

In a busy restaurant it might feel like taking a smoke break is the only way to get a break. But, there are many things you can do to get a quick rest break without smoking. Here are a few ideas:

- Take a fresh air break – step outside and breathe in fresh air or try some breathing exercises.
- Get some activity – you might not be able to walk far from the restaurant but try pacing outside to get in extra steps.
- Try some gentle standing or seated stretches. Check out health.harvard.edu/dynamic-stretches for some ideas.

Smoking is not just a habit, it is a serious addiction. It can be hard to quit, but getting support doubles your chances of quitting. 802Quits offers free quit help for all Vermonters, including free patches and gum or lozenges, and quit help online, by phone or in-person. Visit 802Quits.org to get started.

Make quick snacks healthy snacks

When you work in a restaurant, your meal breaks might be quick and feel rushed, but you can still make them count. Here are three simple tips to eat healthy when you might be in a rush:

- Grab one serving of fruits or veggies that don’t need any preparation – a handful of cherry tomatoes or baby carrots, an apple, banana or a bunch of grapes.
- Avoid drinking sugary drinks like soda, energy or sports drinks. Have a water bottle nearby so you can drink water when you are thirsty.
- Eat mindfully – be careful about snacking without thinking about it, especially on fried foods or sweets.

Don’t take stress home with you

Working in a restaurant can be stressful. Too much stress can negatively affect your overall health, especially if you experience it for a long period of time. Finding ways to de-stress during the day can help you not take stress home with you.

It is important to seek help if you feel you are having trouble managing stress or feeling symptoms of depression. It is also important not to use alcohol or drugs to deal with stress because these substances can worsen how you feel in the long run. Don’t be afraid to ask for help if you think you might be struggling with addiction.

Call Vermont 2-1-1 to learn about services in your area that can help you.

- Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-228-7395
- Sexual Violence Hotline: 1-800-489-7273
- Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255



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 at uvm.edu/health/guided-mindfulness-exercises for more guided mindfulness activities.