

THE FACTS

- It is widely accepted that a healthy diet is important in maintaining good health and can help to reduce the risk of some cancers and cardiovascular disease (coronary heart disease and stroke).
- The economic consequences of unhealthy eating can be severe. They are reflected in costs to employers for absenteeism, reduced productivity and disability.
- Healthy eating and active living can:
 - reduce the risk of becoming overweight
 - protect against some colds and flu
 - reduce anxiety and stress

this can lead to improved employee morale, decreased absenteeism, higher productivity and lower health care costs.

WHAT A WORKPLACE CAN DO

- Any business large or small can promote healthy eating. Action will depend on the size of and the resources available to your business. Remember healthy eating activities should be voluntary - not everyone will be interested in participating.
- It is important to examine how the workplace itself influences the eating patterns of employees e.g. time available for breaks, access to healthy food options and the influence of shiftwork on employee health.
- If your workplace has a canteen, work with caterers to ensure that healthy eating and dietary guidelines are reflected in the ingredients used, the cooking methods employed, the types of food provided and the way food is displayed and promoted.
- Many workplaces that do not have canteen facilities provide kitchen facilities to allow employees to prepare their own lunch or bring in a packed lunch. It may be useful to display healthy eating information and provide a selection of fresh fruit for employees.
- If you are providing a working lunch or buffet ask the caterers to include healthier options such as salads, fruit, and whole-meal bread to allow people to make their own choice.
- If your workplace has a vending machine, try to include healthier food options such as yogurt and fresh fruit.
- Promote and participate in local healthy eating campaigns.
- Provide drinking water throughout the workplace.

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HELP IS AT HAND

- Health Promotion Department
12c Gransha Park, Clooney Road, Derry/Londonderry
028 7186 5127
- Community Dietician
028 7135 1350

RESOURCES

- Healthy Eating at Work, published by the Health Education Authority in 1994. This is a two-part training pack containing-Part 1:A handbook for companies wanting to encourage healthier eating at work and Part 2:A catering package for people involved in organising, producing and serving food in the workplace.

This pack can be accessed in the Resources and Graphics Centre at the Health Promotion Department.

Notes

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