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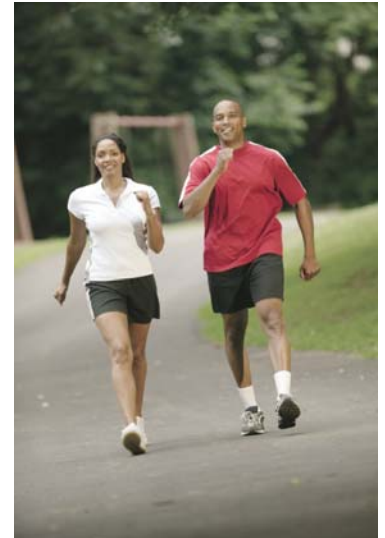
SAFETY MATTERS



HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Poor health habits lead to increased job injuries, lower productivity and a rise in health care costs. Wellness programs refer to employer-sponsored health promotion and disease prevention programs for employees.

An increasing number of companies have invested in wellness programs for their employees. In addition to identifying health risk factors such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and smoking, early intervention may prevent these conditions from becoming chronic and long term health issues. Successful wellness programs could lead to healthier employees, increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and lower health care costs.



HEALTH RISK FACTORS

Obesity – *The American Heart Association* 2003 statistics estimate 129 million American adults are considered to be overweight or obese. Eating frequent, large portion meals that have little nutritional value leads to weight gain. Excessive weight has been shown to negatively affect the health, quality of life and life expectancy of a person. Obesity has also been linked to increasing the risk of medical conditions such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke and asthma.

High Cholesterol – Having a poor diet not only leads to obesity but may result in high cholesterol levels. Consuming food that has high calorie, sugar and fat content increases the chances of heart disease.



Smoking – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 46 million (23.5%) American adults are smokers. Scientific evidence shows that smoking is highly addictive and leads to serious health conditions.



Physical Inactivity – Lack of exercise due to the constraints of long work hours and family responsibilities can result in various health issues. According to the *National Center for Health Statistics*, less than one third of US adults engage in regular physical activity. Consult a physician before embarking on an exercise program.

COMPONENTS OF A WELLNESS PROGRAM

The elements of a workplace wellness program can vary in many ways. Companies may promote a wellness program by providing literature, holding meetings on the importance of healthy living and stressing the benefits of exercising. Other components of a wellness program may include:

- Health Screenings (Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Breast Cancer, etc.)
- Smoking Cessation
- Weight Management
- Stress Management
- Nutritional Education
- On Site Exercise Classes
- Health Risk Assessments
- Recreational / Sports Programs.

