



Healthy Worksite Thought Starter #8

Promote a Holiday Challenge

Whether it's the festive mood or pressure from family and friends, people often eat more than they intend to during the holidays; as coworkers celebrate with each other and share favorite recipes, the workplace can become full of delicious pitfalls. Participants in the Mind & Body™ Program are taught how to identify and navigate potentially difficult eating situations, including those that occur at the workplace during the holidays. Offer support to your employees during the holidays by providing them with an encouraging environment that promotes healthy options for holiday parties and gatherings.

» Here are some ideas for how to support your employees during this time:

- **Lead a healthy holidays initiative.** Hang posters, send motivational emails and hand out flyers encouraging healthy behaviors in the workplace and at home during the holidays. Generate excitement around the office and encourage social support by enlisting the help of employee volunteers.
- **Use positive reinforcement.** Take a fun and encouraging approach by promoting the positive aspects of holiday healthfulness rather than implementing strict guidelines or belittling employees' inevitable desires for a seasonal sugar rush.
- **Educate employees on holiday health tips.** Print health tips in your monthly newsletter or hold an informational meeting that will teach employees smart ways to keep the pounds off during the holidays.
- **Draft holiday food policies.** Don't be a Scrooge, but do lay out clear guidelines for what you deem to be acceptable holiday fare. If you have an office potluck, set limits on how many desserts should be brought and encourage participants to bring healthy alternatives to traditional holiday favorites.
- **Hold a contest.** Encourage a little bit of healthy rivalry among coworkers by hosting a Healthy Holiday Bake-Off. Award prizes for the Best Healthy Recipe.
- **Host a healthy food drive.** Many people look for ways to give back to the community during this time of year; host a food drive that gathers healthy options for those in need.
- **Lead by example.** The best way to encourage your employees to follow healthy eating guidelines is to involve the management team as much as possible and to ensure your own department is setting a good example.