



Ball Corporation and Fort HealthCare Team Up to Help Employees Stay Healthy

FORT ATKINSON – For the past three years, aluminum can manufacturer Ball Corporation (formerly a division of Anheuser-Busch) in Fort Atkinson has partnered with Fort HealthCare to help their nearly 150 employees to not only stay healthy, but have fun doing it.

Ball Corporation invests in the health and wellness of employees because they know that healthy employees and a safe workplace directly affect the company's bottom line. Kreg Blakney is environmental health and safety (EHS) manager at Ball Corporation. With the help of Fort HealthCare's Corporate Health Services department, he has been organizing annual on-site health fairs for employees at the company. “We have a wellness team and it was one of our initiatives to better educate our employees about health,” Blakney said. “One of our annual goals is to have a health fair to pass along information and help employees be healthier. We have typically been a ‘donut plant,’ as in, we like to eat a lot of donuts here. Add to that our aging workforce and eventually health care costs go up.”

Ball Corporation encourages all its employees to participate in the company's themed annual health fairs by offering prize incentives. For example, many employees at Ball enjoy hunting. Because the company usually holds its annual health fair in October, around hunting season, it made sense to incorporate a hunting theme last year. “We themed it 'Hunting for Your Health' and we bought a lot of prizes from Gander Mountain to give to participating employees,” said Blakney. “Not just hunting equipment but also outdoor-type equipment like flashlights, walking sticks and utility tools. Our two top prizes were \$150 Gander Mountain gift certificates and we also gave away two \$50 Menards gift certificates.”

Kevin Jones, Human Resources Manager for Ball Corporation, estimates employee participation in the company's annual health fairs at better than 80 percent. “At our plant, the health fairs are very well received,” Jones said. “Most employees participate and some family members come in for flu shots and other wellness activities we offer.”

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Ball Corporation management already understands what many companies are beginning to appreciate, employee health and wellness is directly tied to productivity. Healthy employees in a safe work environment are at lower risk for illness and injury leading to decreased absenteeism, better retention of skilled workers, decreased medical and worker's compensation costs, improved employee morale and health awareness, and even better compliance with governmental health and safety regulations.

Health awareness alone can go a long way in reducing a company's health care expenditures for employees. Often employees are unaware of their health risks and a health screening can encourage them to seek advice from a health care professional if they find they have health risk factors. For some people, this can be life-saving.

For companies interested in beginning corporate wellness initiatives, holding a health fair is a good start. The data gathered by a company through a health fair can be a great tool for corporate strategic planning, allowing managers to understand the health risks of their employees and then implement corporate policies to address them. Most employees appreciate their employer taking an interest in their health and safety, which improves company morale and productivity.

Fort HealthCare's Corporate Health Services professionals can consult with companies to assess their corporate wellness needs and customize a health fair to a particular budget and goal. Even small investments in employee health and wellness can have a large return, just by making employees more aware of their health and risk factors. "A health fair can be as short as two hours or as long as a full day," said Sharon Rateike, Corporate Wellness Program Coordinator at Fort HealthCare. "Some of the companies in the area like to do a full day health fair because they have vendors there all day and employees can come on breaks, or at lunch time or before or after their shifts."

"We met with Fort HealthCare early on to decide what kinds of services they could provide for us," Blakney said. "As part of the health screenings we had a scavenger hunt. Fort HealthCare gave us health information and we had several questions that employees had to answer at the

health fair. If they turned in the answers to the questions, those who participated were eligible for more prizes.”

Fort HealthCare offers customized employee education sessions on numerous health topics in which a trained professional can speak to a gathering of employees during a time and place that is convenient. Further, Fort HealthCare's trained health and wellness professionals can administer screening tests and health risk assessments, as well as answer employee questions about their health and wellness.

In addition to hosting health fairs for companies, Fort HealthCare's Corporate Health, Wellness and Preventive Services can work with company management to design on-site corporate health programs that can include:

- Tobacco Cessation Programs
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Behavioral Health Services
- Workplace Injury Prevention, Treatment and Management
- CPR and First-Aid Training
- Blood-borne Pathogen Training
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Corporate health and wellness initiatives can be employee-led. Interested employees can organize activities with their employer's permission. Employee interest is a key component in a successful wellness program. For more information on how your business can hold a health fair or start an employee wellness program, please visit FortHealthCare.com or contact Sharon Rateike at (920) 568-5018.