



Making the Sweet Tax a Healthy Choice Incentive

Your workplace can promote healthy eating among employees by providing nutritious foods in the company cafeteria, vending machines and at worksite functions. Some businesses, including local companies like Trek, Standard Process, Fort HealthCare and Lab Safety Supply incentivize employees to make healthier food choices by reducing the cost of healthy foods such as; low calorie snacks, fruit, fresh sandwiches and salads. A “Sweet Tax” may be placed on unhealthy foods such as soda, chips and processed foods to offset this discount. Doing this is an easy way to incentivize employees into making a healthy choice when grabbing for a quick snack or meal. In addition to the “Sweet Tax” many of these companies have also implemented policies that require healthier food options like fruit, be served at meetings or employee events in place of muffins or doughnuts.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Adolescent and School Health has prepared Making It Happen!, which provides guidance on food, snack and beverage content for schools, that can also be applied to worksites. Worksite nutrition can further be improved when developing contracts with food vendors by requiring they include specified percentages of healthy food in recommended portion sizes.

Further, if employees do not have workplace access to fresh fruit and vegetables through cafeterias or vending machines, consider establishing a garden market where local farmers and growers can come to the worksite and sell fresh produce.

Remember to use the following basic marketing techniques at the point of sale that are adapted to promote healthy diet and food choices.

Products should be healthy and appealing to employees.

Example: Fresh wrapped sandwiches, fresh fruit in portable containers

Place healthy foods in easily accessible locations such as vending machines.

Example: Offering vending machine access 24 hours

Promote healthier choices and encourage staff to select those foods.

Example: Use company intranet, newsletters or bulletin boards to publicize.

Price the foods at levels that encourage employees to purchase them.

Example: Price healthy food options at a less expensive rate than non-healthy ones.

Options for vending machine items include:

- Lays Baked Potato Chips -These have about half the fat calories as regular or classic chips.
- Pretzels - Zero sugar. Zero fat. They are a great source of quality carbohydrates that will keep you going throughout the day.
- Oatmeal Bars - The fiber in oatmeal keeps you full for longer periods of time. You will get the right amount of whole grains, fiber and other nutrients all in one place.
- Sun Chips Multigrain Chips - Sun Chips Multigrain Chips have 30 percent less fat than regular potato chips. They have all natural flavors, zero grams of trans fats and no MSG.