





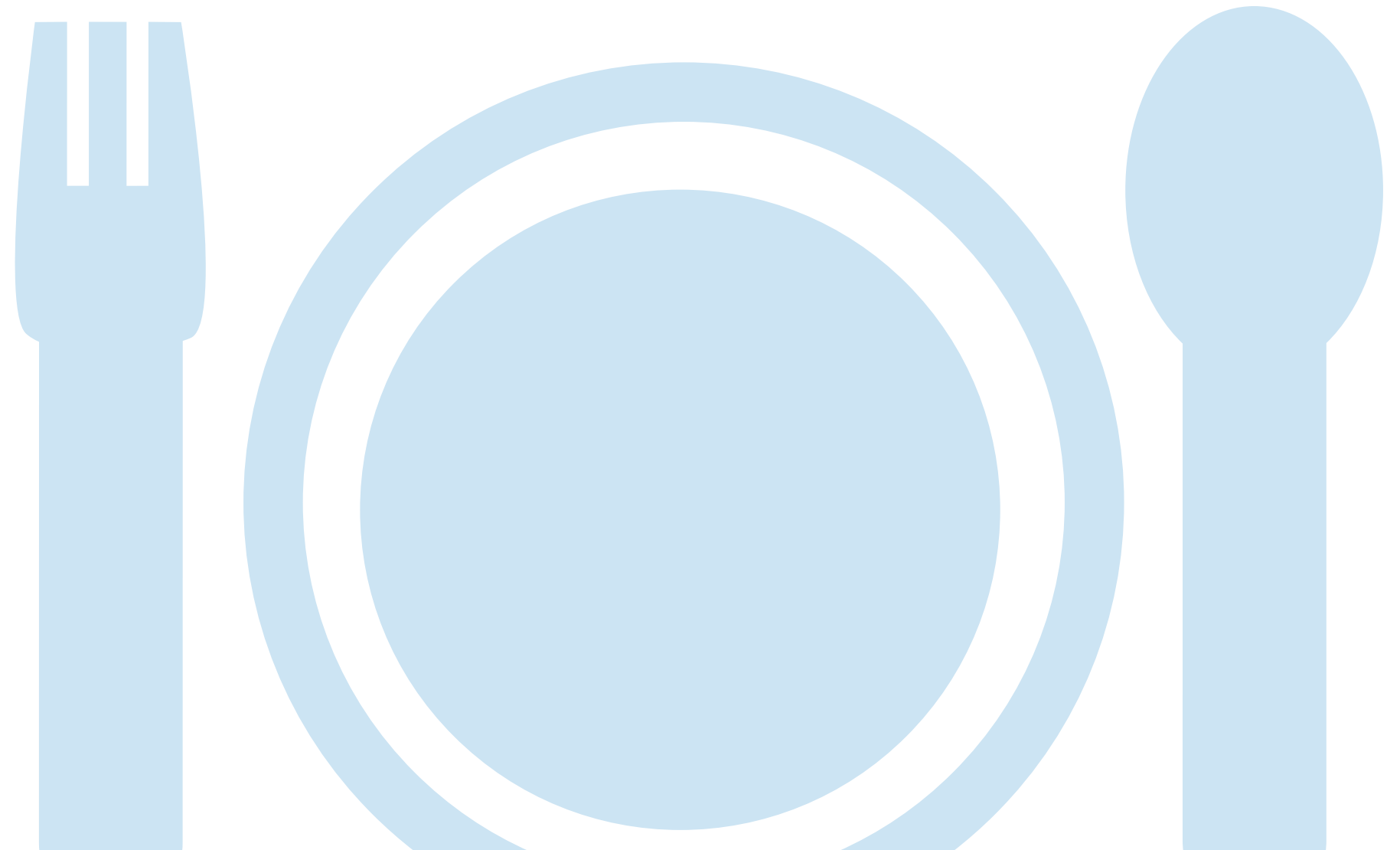
## A PROGRAM GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

Developed by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield



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# As your employees' waistlines are expanding, so are your costs related to the numerous other diseases and conditions attributable to overweight and obesity.

As a company leader and decision-maker, you can be a catalyst for healthful change in your organization. To help support your important business, **Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield** is introducing **Lunch Well**, an educational and interactive model program to help employers and employees understand and apply basic nutrition principles to their lunch planning each day for optimal health.

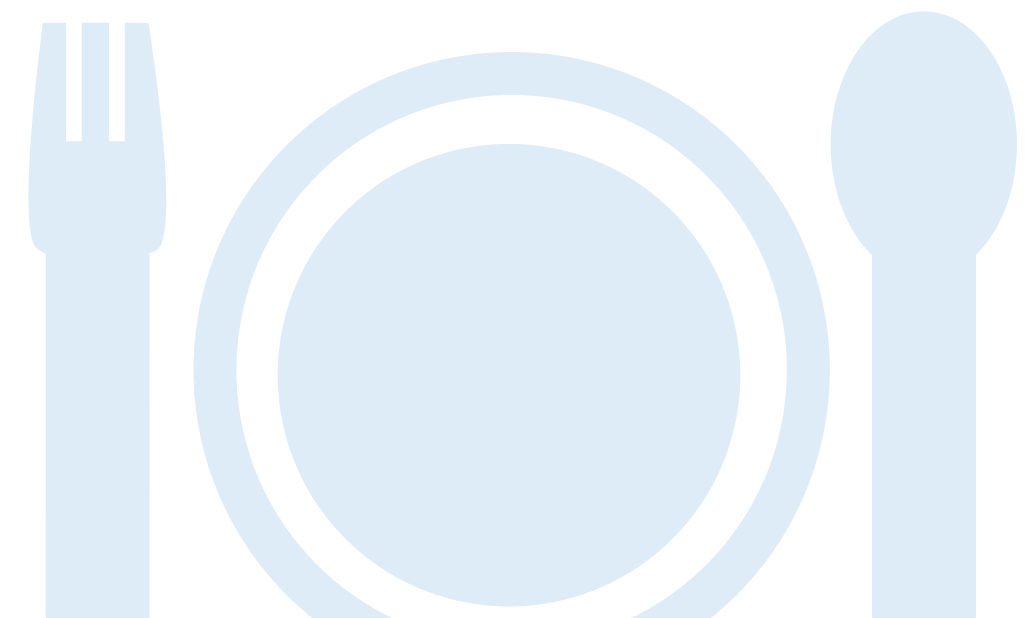
It's a typical part of the American lifestyle to be surrounded by food. Every day, your employees can't escape the barrage of TV and radio ads enticing them – even challenging them – to enjoy triple-decker cheeseburgers, double-thick shakes and crispy fried “fun” foods. As they drive into work, your employees are bombarded by highway “spam” – flashy billboards and neon signs lining the roadways with glowing reminders that food is available throughout the day and sometimes all night.

As your employees' waistlines are expanding, so are your costs related to the numerous other diseases and conditions attributable to overweight and obesity including:<sup>1</sup>

- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Gallbladder disease
- Osteoarthritis
- Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
- Some cancers
- Pregnancy complications

It's not necessarily the ready availability of food that's causing these health problems and their economic burden.

The growing portion sizes and the types of foods being consumed lead to unhealthy eating habits. Inadequate physical activity also is contributing to significant increases in chronic diseases in our workforce.



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# you're picking up the tab

## Obesity:

- The cost of lost productivity related to obesity (Body Mass Index > 30) among Americans ages 17-64 is \$3.9 billion. This value considers the following annual numbers:
  - *Workdays lost related to obesity: 39.3 million*
  - *Physician office visits related to obesity: 62.7 million*
  - *Restricted activity days related to obesity: 239.0 million*
  - *Bed-days related to obesity: 89.5 million*
- 30% of U.S. adults age 20+ are obese (Body Mass Index of 30 or higher).<sup>2</sup> 65% of U.S. adults age 20+ are overweight or obese (Body Mass Index of 25 or higher).
- Total U.S. medical expenditures to treat overweight and obesity was \$92.6 billion.
- According to the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, the cost of obesity in the United States in 2000 was more than \$117 billion (\$61 billion direct and \$56 billion indirect).

## Diabetes:

- The estimated economic cost of diabetes in 2002 was \$132 billion. Of this amount, \$92 billion was due to direct medical costs and \$40 billion due to indirect costs such as lost workdays, restricted activity, and disability due to diabetes.<sup>7</sup>
- \$1.43 billion in absenteeism<sup>8</sup>
- \$32.45 billion in disability<sup>9</sup>
- In 2002, the per capita annual costs of health care for people with diabetes were \$13,243. In stark contrast, the health care costs for people without diabetes was \$2,560.<sup>6</sup>
- Over 8.3 million of workers in the U.S. between the ages of 18-64 - or, about 5.7% of the workforce - have diabetes.<sup>5</sup>

## Heart Disease:<sup>10</sup>

- The cost of heart disease and stroke in the United States is projected to be \$394 billion in 2005, including health care expenditures and lost productivity from death and disability.
- Coronary heart disease is a leading cause of premature, permanent disability in the U.S. workforce.
- Over 6 million hospitalizations each year are due to cardiovascular disease.

- More than 80% of people with high blood cholesterol do not have it under control. A 10% decrease in total blood cholesterol levels may reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease by as much as 30%.
- More than 70 million Americans (over one-fourth of the population) live with a cardiovascular disease.

## High Blood Pressure:

- The estimated direct and indirect cost of high blood pressure is \$59.7 billion in 2005.<sup>13</sup>
- During 1999-2000, nearly 30% of U.S. adults had high blood pressure (hypertension), and another 31% had pre-hypertension.<sup>12</sup>
- 21% of adults age 18+ have been told on two or more visits to their physician that they have high blood pressure.<sup>11</sup>



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# the impact of lunch

Lunch breaks are an important time for employees to rest and refuel for the second half of a busy work day. It is also an optimal time for employees to make a few healthful food choices to keep them well and functioning at their best level.

What they eat for lunch, how much they eat, or if they skip lunch can determine employees' energy levels to perform their job duties. Results from a recent nationwide telephone survey<sup>14</sup> on lunch habits showed that:

- About 58% of U.S. workers say they skip lunch each day if they're too busy.
- 43% reported that they take about 15 minutes or less for lunch during their work day.
- 15% say they eat lunch in their car.

The researchers who compiled results of the survey found that fast-paced lifestyles "contributed to both skipped meals and subsequent unhealthy food choices." They also reported that half of all survey respondents viewed lunch as a way to grab something quick and keep on working.

Respondents to the survey reported these consequences of their poor lunch-eating habits:

- One out of five said they got nauseous or had problems concentrating or thinking.
- One-third felt tired or moody.
- Nearly half said they are more likely to indulge in unhealthy foods as between-meal snacks.
- An additional third confessed to overeating at the next meal if they skipped the previous one.

In addition to their skills, employees' wellness is one of the most valuable assets they can share with their employer. **Healthy, energetic employees may save their employer thousands of dollars in medical expenses and disability claims each year, experience fewer absentee days and increase their productivity.**



Take action today by implementing **Lunch Well** in your organization. As an employer, you have an incredible opportunity to help employees re-learn healthful lunch-eating habits one step at a time. It can start right at the worksite by:

- Giving employees the tools and information that they need to help them eat a healthy lunch that is portioned appropriately with foods that give them the most nutrition from the calories consumed.
- Making worksite modifications that make it easier for employees to make smart choices at lunch.



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# what is Lunch Well?

**Lunch Well** isn't a trendy new diet plan, nor is it intended to "preach" to employees about what they should or should not eat. Instead, **Lunch Well functions as a guide to help employees choose foods that are more nutrient-dense among the options available to them at lunch time.** It considers employees' "real life" situations by recognizing that occupations and shift schedules are as diverse as the people who work them, and that lunch can come from just about anywhere today:

- cafeterias
- drive-thrus
- vending machines
- convenience stores
- grocery stores

And while making the most nutritional choices among these options can be challenging, it is still possible to do so.

**Lunch Well** presents employees with healthy lunch-buying or packing options that help guide them to eat a more balanced meal no matter what their occupation. **The program is based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005** published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is designed to help employees:

- Maintain energy levels, stay productive on the job and lower their risk of serious, costly illnesses
- Choose wisely among the options available to them at lunch time
- Consider the basic food groups as part of their daily lunch plan
- Balance moderation with the right portions
- Get the most nutrition out of the calories consumed
- Enjoy healthier eating whether they pack a lunch or dine out

## How will employees use Lunch Well?

There are a number of colorful educational and interactive tools that you will be able to share with employees to engage them in the **Lunch Well** program:

- Cafeteria and vending machine point of sale signage
- Food group variety posters
- Portions chart
- Lunch planning and preparation guide
- Lunch log, including reminders to include 30 minutes of physical activity in their day
- Tip sheets including how to make healthier selections when lunch comes from:
  - *Fast Food Restaurants*
  - *Convenience Stores*
  - *Restaurant Menus*
  - *Vending Machines*
- 24-hour access to **MyHealth@Anthem** powered by *WebMD* for more nutrition information



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# Lunch Well tools for employers

You will have access to the following **Lunch Well** health communication print/copy-ready tools that can be distributed throughout your organization.

These tools are conveniently located on the **Time Well Spent** “Healthy Eating” tool kit. Go to [anthem.com](http://anthem.com) and click “Employer”, then select your state from the drop down box, and hit “Enter”. Select “Time Well Spent”, then choose “Healthy Eating” tool kit. There you will find these **Lunch Well** materials:

- Educational drop-in articles on healthy eating
- Posters to promote awareness and nutrition education
- Fast-fact handout sheets for dining in or out
- Point of purchase display posters and static cling stickers to distinguish healthier food options in cafeterias and vending machines

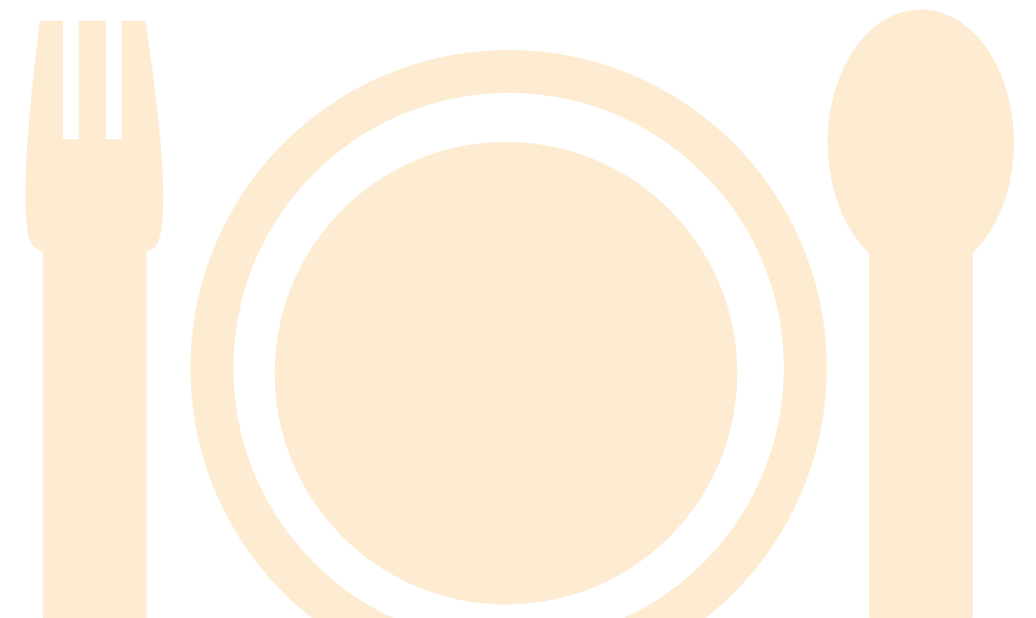
- **Lunch Well** logo for use in company newsletters or online/offline bulletins

- Lunch-time food choice tracking

You also have 24-hour access to:

- **MyHealth@Anthem** powered by WebMD, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield’s member web site for content-rich health information including:

- *Fast food choices*
- *Calorie counter*
- *Body Mass Index (BMI) calculator*
- *Fitness and Nutrition*
- *Nutrition Facts*
- *Mini Health Assessments*
- *Condition Centers*



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# implementing Lunch Well

## Implementing Lunch Well in your organization

Worksites are an ideal channel for promoting change in large segments of the population. One reason is that they provide support for individual behavior change by altering the environment and social norms.<sup>15</sup> For eating behavior improvements to be effective, a combination of strong, meaningful messages, energetic promotion and management support are necessary.

## Suggestions for preparing a Lunch Well program launch

Set a program launch date and build interest in the mean time. Let employees know something new is coming that is going to benefit all of them. Consider modifying your worksite by:

- Designating an attractive, tidy break room on site where employees can enjoy a full lunch break (or food break for all shift workers)
- Making refrigerators, freezers, and microwaves available for food storage and preparation
- Reconfiguring vending machine options to include healthier foods and snacks including:
  - *Bottled water*
  - *100% fruit juices*
  - *Baked chips instead of fried*
  - *Cereal bars and fewer candy bars*
  - *Low-fat graham crackers*
  - *Pretzels*
  - *Yogurt*
  - *Fruit*
  - *Nuts*
  - *Low-fat and skim milk*
- Offering discounts for healthier vending machine selections
- Incorporating more nutritionally-balanced menu selections in company cafeterias
- Offering discounts for healthier cafeteria selections
- Establishing a pro-health policy outlining what foods can be served at company sponsored luncheons



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# implementing Lunch Well

continued

## Introducing Lunch Well to your employees

Most employees like to hear from their organization's top leaders. **Lunch Well** can have the most impact if top-level management is actively engaged in the program and communicates its benefits directly with employees. Also, frequently rotating nutrition messages in highly visible areas throughout your organization increases the likelihood that employees will notice and act on them. Just as it is important to relay work safety messages within your organization, so it is with nutrition education messages.

Promote the beginning of the program with a "splash" of fun and keep it fun. Build excitement before the program begins:

- Provide incentives to increase participation and to motivate employees to eat a healthier lunch. Find out what appeals to your employees and build an incentive program around these ideas. Incentives can be offered on a limited budget. Contact local businesses. Many donate products at cost, or free, in exchange for public relations exposure.
- Choose motivated employees as team captains to lead the program
- Hire a magician to juggle fruits and vegetables

- Dress up in a vegetable or fruit costume and give out fresh fruit and vegetables, packages of nuts, healthy cookies and/or discount coupons for restaurants with healthy choices
- Set up a farmer's market. Fill a wagon with fruits and vegetables and wheel it through the office with a sign saying, "Coming soon to a desk near you."
- Offer exciting new menu options in the cafeteria
- Display program posters and messages in highly visible areas throughout the worksite

## Enlisting Management and Employee Support<sup>16</sup>

Choosing a dedicated, enthusiastic **Lunch Well** leadership team within your organization will be key to a successful program launch and its longevity. Consider these team-building steps:

- Work within the organizational structure of the company to enlist support for your Lunch Well efforts. This will contribute to a greater organizational "ownership" of the **Lunch Well** program, increase program participation and increase the likelihood of adopting better eating habits.

- Enlist the support of the CEO, President or the highest manager at the worksite. This is a tremendous opportunity for leadership to:

- *Proclaim **Lunch Well** at the worksite so that employees feel supported by their superiors to take a lunch break each day*

- *Endorse various worksite modifications such as new catering policies, cafeteria and vending machine food options that encourage healthier food choices*

- Work with employee representatives to help plan, promote and deliver the worksite interventions. Such employees are trained to deliver health messages at project activities and promote activities among their coworkers. Their role as "cheerleaders" or "champions" of the program is important in moving the projects forward and in representing the interests of all employees. Also, designate a worksite coordinator to serve as primary contact with the **Lunch Well** administrator(s) within the organization.



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# suggested corporate policy adjustments

## Catering guidelines

Many organizations provide food for meetings and various social events. As a leader in the **Lunch Well** program, you could take on the role of encouraging local worksites to develop and follow **Lunch Well Recommended Catering Guidelines**.

## Why have a catering guideline or policy?

Choosing a dedicated, enthusiastic **Lunch Well** leadership team within your organization will be key to a successful program launch and its longevity. Consider these team-building steps:

- To lead by example by incorporating the **Lunch Well** healthy eating guidelines.
- To encourage serving healthy food options at meetings and various social events.
- To promote eating from the basic food groups.
- To help improve employee health in an effort to reduce health care costs and absenteeism.

## What are the components of a catering policy?

The goal of the catering policy is to improve the nutrient quality of foods served in the workplace. This includes food that is brought in for meetings and various social events (i.e., birthdays, holiday parties, awards ceremonies, client receptions, etc.) and food that is prepared on site.

- Commit to serving at least one choice of fruit, vegetable, whole grains and lean meats with every catered meal.
- Where possible, request that caterers provide foods that preserve the integrity of healthier items as “low-fat” foods so that employees can gain a better understanding of the food-health relationship.
- Ask caterers to provide foods that follow the nutrition guidelines outlined in the USDA’s Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005. <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

## Cafeteria service interventions

To complement nutrition education messages being promoted in the workplace, it is also important to synchronize these messages with healthful foods offered in company cafeterias.

- Increase the cafeteria’s offering of fresh foods that are appealing and healthy including more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean meats.
- Set portion sizes of meats, vegetables, fruits and whole grains according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 and the 5-a-day plan ([www.5aday.gov](http://www.5aday.gov)).
- Price healthier dishes and a la carte items affordably.
- Guide employees visually to healthier options by using point-of-purchase displays and/or nutritional content fact sheets.
- Consider healthier items that also reflect the cultural diversity of employees.
- Request quarterly reports from cafeteria directors showing which foods are being purchased regularly.



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# suggested corporate policy adjustments continued

## Vending Machine Interventions<sup>18</sup>

Since some employees' lunches come from vending machines, working with food service vendors for more healthful options can help in your **Lunch Well** efforts.

### Tools you need:

- Dedicated time to focus on this small, but significant effort.
- Pre-planning so that intervention coincides with vending machine contract renewal.

## Five-step strategy for re-merchandising vending machines:

1. Identify employee representatives working on the project to assess need and interest in change of vending machine offerings.
2. Conduct a "Vending Machine Survey" among employees to determine their interest in having healthful foods as options in their vending machines. Identify preferences for vending machine items.
3. Identify worksite staff who deals with vending companies. Determine the date for vending machine contract renewal and schedule your work plan several months in advance of this date.

4. Contact vendor representatives to:

- a. Explain the Lunch Well program effort.
- b. Share the results of the survey that supports employees' desire for more healthful food options to get vendor support.
- c. Providing vending company with suggestions for healthful food choices and determine which could be included.
- d. Request quarterly reports from vendors showing which foods are being purchased regularly.

5. Recruit employee representatives to publicize and promote the healthful changes in vending options:

- a. Post signs near vending machines and place labels next to healthier items.
- b. Continue to publicize the vending options.



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# keeping your employees motivated

Initially, many employees will be excited about the **Lunch Well** program; but the ongoing challenge will be to keep them motivated to make permanent changes in their eating habits. Incentives help to renew enthusiasm and interest. Rewarding milestones is also a great motivator. Consider the following promotion and reward suggestions to help keep your employees encouraged:

- Provide give-a-ways such as lunch bags, t-shirts, etc.
- Encourage Lunch Making Clubs.
  - *Have the boss make a week's worth of lunches for the winner of the Weight Loss Challenge.*
  - *Employees make lunches for each other for a week straight. If done in groups of four, this means having to make lunch only one week each month. This fosters team building and allows employees time off from lunch making.*

- Evaluate your program.
  - *Track purchase patterns in the cafeteria and at vending machines.*
  - *Monitor worksite competition results using a tracking form.*
  - *Collect anecdotal comments received from employees.*
- Adjust your program as needed to help maintain enthusiasm.
- Share your success stories with your Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield representatives. **We want to know what works!**



**The ongoing challenge will be keeping employees motivated to make permanent changes in their daily eating habits. Incentives can help to renew enthusiasm and interest.**



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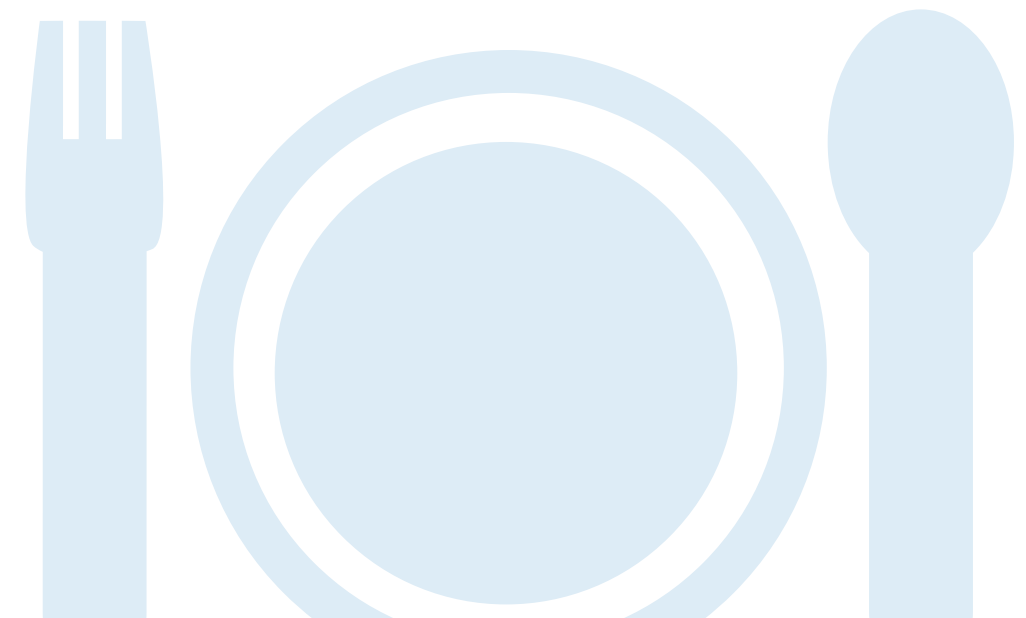
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