

Today's Safety Daily Advisor Tip:

How to Shed Those Holiday Pounds ... and Get That Diet Back on Track!

Topic: [Training](#)

If your employees are like a lot of people, they've put on a few pounds over the holidays. Right about now with New Year's resolutions looming large (and maybe some bellies, too), more than a few are probably thinking about getting their diet back on track and trimming off the extra weight.

Although there are hundreds of diets and many theories about dieting, health professionals recommend a very simple but effective formula as the best way to lose weight: Cut back on calories + get more exercise.

Doctors and nutritionists discourage quick fixes like skipping meals (dieters tend to overeat later or eat snacks with empty calories), cutting out a whole food group such as carbohydrates, or taking any kind of diet pill that isn't prescribed by a medical doctor. These approaches may help a person lose a few pounds, but in the long run, people usually put those pounds back on-and then some-when they stop dieting. And sooner or later, every crash dieter goes back to his or her old eating habits. Even worse than regaining weight, fad or crash diets don't provide proper nutrition and can be harmful to health.

The key to success is a sensible, well-balanced diet and daily exercise.

A diet rich in a variety of foods that provide all essential nutrients and don't contain excess fat, sugar, salt, or alcohol allows employees to maintain a healthy weight or lose weight. At the same time, a healthy diet reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and osteoporosis. The key to successful dieting and good nutrition is to eat every day from all the four food groups (meat, fruit/vegetable, bread/cereal, and dairy). Here are some other tips you can pass along to diet-conscious employees:

- Mix up choices within the food groups.*
- Focus on fruits.*
- Vary your veggies.*
- Eat calcium-rich foods such as milk, cheese, and yogurt.*
- Make half your grains (bread and cereal) whole.*
- Go lean with protein (lean meat, fish, and poultry).*

Along with an emphasis on food intake, dieters also need to increase weekly physical activity if they want to see real and lasting weight loss. That means enjoying a favorite sport a few times a week or taking a walk for half an hour or so every day.

A fast and fun way to put it all together-diet, nutrition, exercise, and weight loss.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed an online dietary and exercise assessment tool that can provide your workers with information on the quality of their diets, status of physical activity, and related nutrition messages. It's called *MyPyramid Tracker* (referring to the food pyramid, built on the four food groups), and employees can access it at www.mypyramidtracker.gov.

A "food calories/energy balance" feature automatically calculates energy balance by subtracting the energy you expend from physical activity from your calorie intake. By using this tool, employees can better understand the link between calories, nutrition, weight loss, and regular physical activity. Your workers can track what they eat and their physical activity status every day for up to a year with *MyPyramid*. And there's an easy online tutorial that'll get them started.

Try it! You'll find that this mix of careful calorie intake and increased exercise is a winning formula- or maybe we should say a *losing* formula!

Why It Matters...

- Good nutrition is a vital part of good health, and good health is essential for a productive work performance.
- Crash or fad diets usually don't provide proper nutrition and can also be harmful to health.
- While people might lose weight with trendy diets, they usually gain it right back plus more when they stop dieting.
- Maintaining a healthy weight not only looks and feels good, it's good for employees and helps reduce the risk of disease.