

2.2 Nutrition Success Stories



Healthy Food Policy

the people

Madison Paper Industries (MPI) is a manufacturer of supercalendered papers, employing 260 people in the town of Madison, Maine. MPI has had an active Wellness Group since mid-1999. The group was formed to address concerns specifically related to an increased incidence of cancer diagnoses among employees and their dependents, as well as increasing healthcare costs. Group members consist of employees from all levels of the company, both salaried (exempt and nonexempt) and unionized. Twelve employees participate regularly in the group, which became increasingly active in November 2001 when awarded a grant from the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program.

the need

MPI has a Guest House on-site where trainings and meetings are held. The Guest House Caretaker was consistently asked to provide doughnuts, coffee, and soda for meetings and training sessions. The Wellness Group recognizes that poor nutrition is a risk factor for many preventable diseases, and so decided that offering fresh fruit, water, and 100% fruit juice would support and encourage employees to eat healthy foods during the workday.

the idea

The initial focus of the Wellness Group was to address the risk factors for preventable disease. As poor nutrition is one such risk factor, healthy choice offerings were targeted as a goal. An informal workplace healthy choice food and beverage policy was instituted for meetings and training sessions where foods and beverages are provided. Fresh fruits, water, and 100% fruit juice are available as healthy choices when foods and beverages are provided at company meetings or training sessions.

the idea at work

The Guest House Caretaker is responsible for supplying food and beverages at company meetings and events. The Caretaker was invited





to join the Wellness Group, as it was understood that any initiative to increase healthy food choices would be difficult to manage without her “buy-in.” At a meeting, the idea of providing fresh fruit, water, and 100% fruit juice was introduced. The Guest House Caretaker agreed to provide these healthy choices at all meetings and training sessions where foods and/or beverages are provided.

the costs

The cost of this wellness initiative was absorbed into the Guest House budget. The costs included purchasing fresh fruit, water, and 100% fruit juice to be offered each time food and beverages were made available. The administrative need is met by the Guest House Caretaker, who is responsible for ordering and stocking food and beverages for meetings and training sessions.

the results

Healthy food choices were inconsistent for the first few months after the policy was created. Through repeated requests and conversations regarding the need to make the healthy choices consistently available, healthy foods have now been offered at all company meetings where food is served, since March 2002.

The process of offering healthy choices was relatively easy since other foods were already being provided. Having one or two specific people providing the foods and beverages covered the administrative need. The biggest challenge was getting the buy-in of the Guest House Caretaker regarding the need to make these choices available on a consistent basis at every meeting or training session where food and beverages were provided. This policy ensures that healthy choices will be available for those who may be on restricted diets, such as individuals with diabetes, hypertension, or high cholesterol. It also supports those who are attempting to make healthy choices and encourages healthy eating and good nutrition. Specific requests for healthy meals are honored.

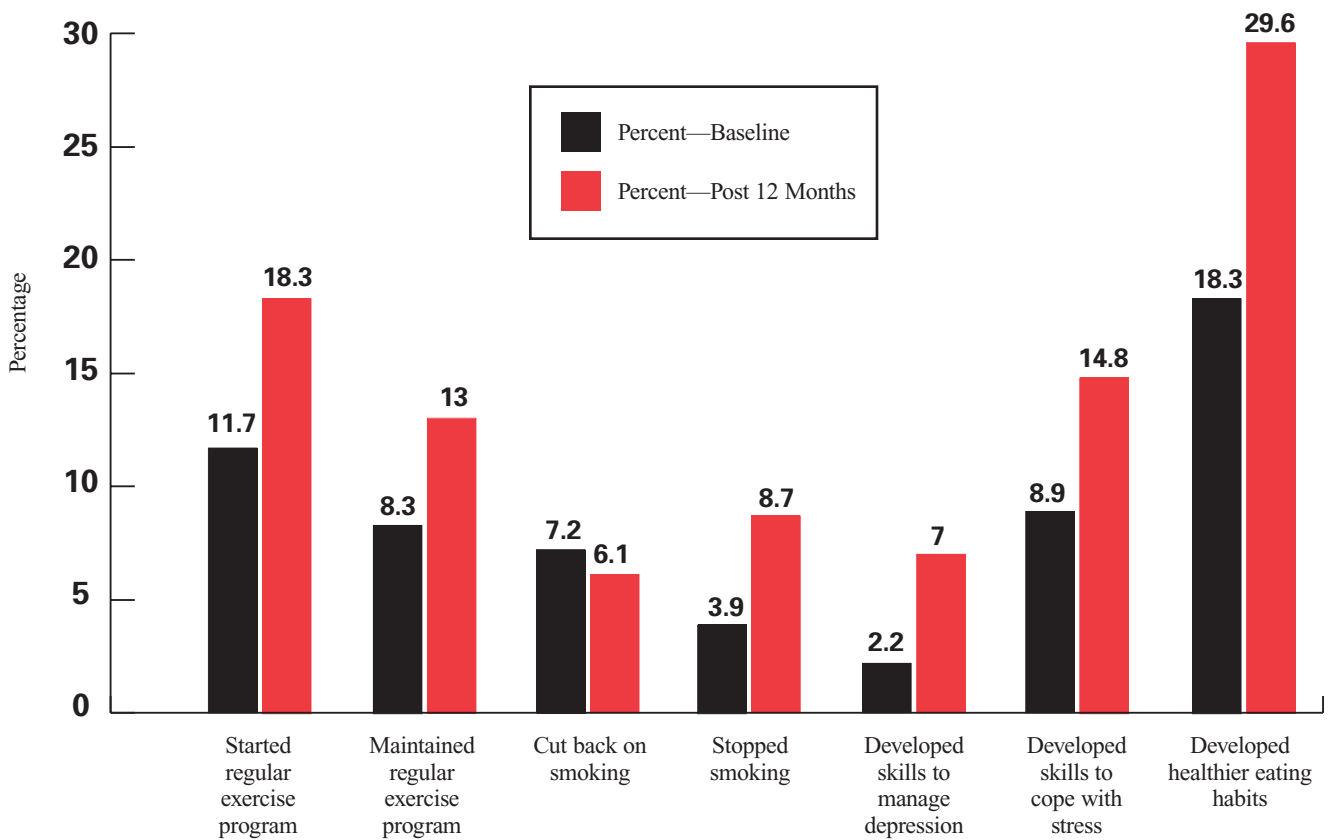
The new policy appears to have influenced employee behaviors around nutrition as well. By initiating changes such as the healthy food policy, MPI saw a 62% increase over the course of one year in the percentage of employees who reported that they developed healthy eating habits as a result of the company’s

2.2 Nutrition Success Stories

Healthy Food Policy (continued)

efforts. This data, along with other self-reported behaviors, is presented in the following chart.

Worksite Support: Indicate each of the items listed below that you have started or accomplished that were influenced by your company or work setting:



contact(s)

Eula DeRocle, Madison Paper Industries, P.O. Box 129, Madison, ME 04950,
207-696-1202, eula.derocle@madpaper.com