

## Workplace Health and Wellness

Individual Health and Wellness is extremely important and should be held as a high priority in the workplace. The term “workplace” may be outside in the elements or in a climate-controlled building. It could be a home office or a semi-truck. Regardless of what a person does for work, there needs to be a focus on health and wellness to improve productivity and reduce absenteeism.

Health, in general, needs to be held as a personal priority before it can be held as a workplace priority. This includes regular checkups as suggested by a primary care physician and healthy eating, exercise, and sleep habits. Health and wellness must be a lifestyle, not just a habit at the workplace. Keep in mind, a week has 168 hours and if we work a 40-hour week, that means 76% of our lives are spent away from work. However, below are some ideas that can be incorporated into the workplace to improve overall health and wellness.

1. **Encourage Physical Activity:** Sedentary behavior is increasingly prevalent in modern workplaces, leading to many health problems. If most of your work is performed in a seated position, consider adding extra steps to your day. Park a safe walking distance away from buildings in the parking lot and take the stairs if possible. If you have a meeting with a coworker and the content allows, consider a walking meeting. Standing desks are becoming more popular. Try using part of lunch and other breaks for a brisk walk. While each suggestion might seem small, it is the accumulated caloric expenditure that can contribute to health benefits.
2. **Healthy Eating Options:** A workday will likely require a meal and/or snacks. Nutrition plays a crucial role in overall well-being. Having nutritious food options can make a significant impact on overall health and work performance. If nutritious food options specific to your diet and tastes are not readily available, packing a lunch becomes important. A small amount of planning can go a long way. Without packing a lunch, we fall vulnerable to selecting poor nutritional options or nothing to eat at all. Also, be sure to have ample amounts of fluids to remain hydrated throughout the day.
3. **Foster a Healthy Work-Life Balance:** An "always-on" culture can lead to burnout and negatively affect one's physical and mental health. Do your best to live in the moment. While at work, work hard. Minimize distractions and create an environment conducive to productivity. While on breaks and off the clock, that is the time to focus on other aspects of life that also deserve a large amount of attention.

The strategies mentioned above are just a starting point, and individuals can evaluate their work schedule to implement new ways to focus on health and wellness.

For information on services offered by the Meigs County Health Department, visit [www.meigs-health.com](http://www.meigs-health.com)

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