



GETTING HEALTHY TOGETHER

Looking after toddlers for a living can take every bit of your energy. So when the Health Means Business project offered to help staff at the Little People Day Nursery in Wakefield to learn their ABC of health, they jumped at the chance.

"One of the main reasons for doing it was that we didn't tend to do anything together outside the business – everybody's got their own lives," said Heather Iveson. "We wanted to do something as a team. What better way to do that than to take part in healthy activities together?"



L-R Heather Iveson, Jemma Prendergast; Sara Antcliff, Sarah Collingwood, Tracy Griffith

As personal assistant to the managing director as well as providing childcare support when needed, Heather has played a key role in establishing a healthier lifestyle at the nursery.

"After a meeting with Gemma Naylor from Health Means Business, the project offered to provide a fitness trainer to run an exercise class after work," said Heather.

Run by a local fitness instructor, these have quickly become a popular fixture with staff at the nursery, which has now taken over funding of the hour-long sessions.

"We do circuit training, running in the car park – that kind of thing," said Heather. "We can all go at our own pace and it's different every week. The camaraderie has been great. We all give each other support and help."

The project has also put staff in touch with health trainers and reflexologists and is trying to set up reduced cost memberships at local gyms. In the meantime, it has been providing information on eating more healthily and running BMI and blood pressure checks – an initiative which has benefited Heather personally.

"It turned out I had high blood pressure," she said. "If I hadn't been taking part in the project I wouldn't have found out."

Meanwhile, back at the nursery, members of staff are passing on the lessons they've learned to parents and children.

"The parents are aware that we're doing this and it's hopefully having an impact on them as well," said Heather. "At a recent parents' evening we were promoting the idea of eating 5-a-day and we've started doing an exercise CD with the kids."

"You need good health when you're working with 0s to 5s who have boundless energy. Hopefully we're setting them a good example too."

Thank You...

I would like to advocate the use of 'Health Means Business' to other employers. I saw your advert in the 'Post' and felt it would give all our staff a quick opportunity to have a personal health check. Knowing that I myself am slightly overweight, I felt that this was just the boost I needed to see an adviser. Small but important adjustments came quickly and I focused better on what were the healthier things to eat and how to fit short bursts of exercise into my busy life.

All your staff are so pleasant and helpful. The ability to see you at lunch times has made a big difference to uptake of information. Keep up the vital work.

Many thanks, Asha Ellis (Ellis Dental Practice Ltd)



L-R: Stephanie Lockett & Asha Ellis

New Scheme is changing lives

Wakefield's new Fit For Work Scheme is on target to change the lives of people with health issues in the Wakefield area. The scheme, which has only been in place for three months, has already enabled people to reach goals that they thought were out of reach.

The free scheme, supported by Wakefield Together, offers specialist advice for people in employment with any sort of health condition who would like to remain in work, or return to work after a period of absence.

Rachel registered on the scheme after hearing about it from a friend. "I was experiencing some health issues and needed professional advice. I was determined to keep working, but I didn't know how I could do it", she said. Rachel was introduced to Gareth, a dedicated Caseworker, who talked to her about what she would like to achieve in terms of her career and her health. By providing her with CV writing advice, job search skills and essential information on how to manage her health conditions, Gareth showed Rachel how she could achieve her goals.

After gaining valuable skills, Rachel attended an interview and was delighted when she secured a new role. Talking about her experience, she said "I would recommend the scheme to anyone with health issues who would like work focused support. Gareth gave me the confidence to write my CV and attend interviews for jobs that I knew I would like to do. I was also shown how to manage my health conditions so that I could enjoy my time at work."

The scheme is free to anyone in employment who is registered with a GP surgery in WF1 – WF11. If you would like further information or would like to talk to someone about the service, call 0800 023 4665 or e-mail info@a4efitforwork.co.uk.



L-R Gareth Wilson and Rachel Longbottom

Wakefield Healthy Business Awards

The Wakefield Healthy Business Awards are open to all businesses across Wakefield District from the smallest to the largest.



Some companies may already have health and wellbeing as a priority in their business, whilst others may need some advice, mentoring and guidance. The Awards Team will work with your organisation free of charge to put in place small but meaningful changes to improve the health and wellbeing of your organisation.

The Aims:

- To reward businesses that look after their employees
- To work with local businesses to provide a healthy environment at work
- To improve business performance by reducing absenteeism

For more information and an informal chat call Lisa Burnett on 07990 556833.

FREE blood pressure checks for all your staff

The Health Means Business Team are able to come in to your organisation and spend a few minutes with each member of staff to offer blood pressure checks and provide general information on keeping your blood pressure healthy.

High blood pressure is a cause or contributing factor of 170,000 deaths each year in England alone and usually does not present any obvious symptoms. As a result it is known as the 'silent killer' but early detection can help to significantly reduce the risk of developing a number of serious health conditions.

The checks are free of charge and staff will appreciate your interest in their health. Contact Gemma for further information on 07788 754159.

COMING SOON:

Health Means Business 'Physical Activity Portfolio'

Are you keen to get more active but just stuck with the how? Well, we can help! If you can't wait for the portfolio to be posted to you and want a sneak preview, please email gemma@royds.org.uk

How to beat the 'Winter Blues'

1 in 15 Britons becomes depressed in winter (and suffers from Seasonal Affective Disorder). Millions more have low spirits or the 'winter blues' during the winter months.

The Mental Health Foundation estimates that 1 in 8 people in the UK experience a mild low mood during winter, with symptoms including lethargy, craving for sugary foods and sleep problems, but not full depression. In other words millions of us get the winter blues.

So if the short, dark days are getting you down, what can you do to feel like yourself again?

Lighten Up!

If the winter blues is about lack of daylight, it's no surprise that treatment involves getting more light in to your life! If you feel low in winter try and get outside as often as you can, especially on those rare bright days! Sitting by a window can also help.

Improve your diet

It's also important to eat well during the winter. Winter blues can make you crave sugary foods and carbohydrates such as chocolate, pasta and bread, but don't forget to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables too.

Get Active!

There is another weapon against the seasonal slump: keeping active. Activity is believed to change the level of mood regulating chemicals in the brain. It can also help by providing a pleasant change of scene and helping you to meet new people. Outdoor exercise will have a double benefit because you will also gain some daylight.

Stay Active This Winter!

Colder weather and dark nights can make exercise seem an effort, which is why we tend to put on weight over the winter.

However much we may want to hibernate, we need to stay active in the winter months. Regular exercise can contribute to the prevention and management of over 20 conditions and diseases and also releases natural feel-good hormones and improves sleep – both of which can help lift mood and banish the winter doldrums.

Exercise is an essential part of any healthy lifestyle, whatever the season. Adults should aim to do a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity at least five times a week

Healthy Winter Recipes

Eating well and maintaining a healthy and balanced diet plays an important part in the health and well-being of all ages during the winter months.

When it's cold outside, it can be tempting to curl up and indulge in comfort food. And with Christmas coming, treats can be more tempting than ever. But winter is a long season and regular snacking on foods high in fat, salt and sugar can take its toll.

Curried Vegetables with Pitta Bread

Preparation time: 30 minutes (Cooking time: 10-20 minutes)

You will need:

- 1 red onion, peeled and sliced
- 2 courgettes, sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 small cauliflower, separated into small florets
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2-4 teaspoons curry paste
- 400g tinned chickpeas, drained
- 4 tablespoons low fat crème fraiche
- 4 tablespoons vegetable stock
- 4 pitta breads

Method:

1. Stir fry the onion, courgette, carrot and cauliflower in oil with the curry paste until soft.
2. Add the chickpeas, vegetable stock and season well.
3. Cover and gently heat for 5-10 minutes until heated through.
4. Stir in the crème fraiche, heat gently.
5. Warm the pitta bread, and serve with veg curry.

Regular exercise will give you more energy, which will help you get out of your warm bed on cold, dark mornings.

Exercise helps to improve your blood circulation and generate heat, so a short period of activity will help you keep warm when it's chilly.

Your body's defences will also benefit. Regular exercise boosts your immune system, killing off nasty germs and viruses that are around in the winter.

Exercising improves your mood. So even if you're feeling down because the days are shorter and wetter, getting active will release happy endorphins (hormones) into your brain. You'll cheer up and feel more relaxed. Exercise also gives you a sense of purpose, and boosts your self-esteem.

You'll probably be tempted to comfort eat during the colder months. Exercising will help you manage your weight better and tone up your body. Eat a healthy balanced diet and take regular exercise to maintain a healthy body weight.

Walk your way to a healthy lifestyle

We all know the importance of exercise...yes that dreaded word! But how many of us are actually reaching the recommended levels of physical activity needed to keep us fit and healthy?

On average people take between 3,000 and 5,000 steps per day, however research shows that walking 10,000 steps a day can significantly improve your health and can burn between 300 and 400 calories!

Here's how you can increase your physical activity levels;

Before work...

- Wake up 30 minutes early and go for a walk, swim or cycle!
- Do an activity – for example yoga, pilates, or tai chi
- Walk or cycle all or part of the way to or from work
- Arrange to meet friends or colleagues as you walk or cycle
- Park at the furthest end of the car park
- Visit your local leisure centre on the way to work, especially if you can make use of flexitime

During work...

- Do some quick stretching at your desk throughout the day
- When you can, walk instead of using the phone or email
- Put rubbish in the bin furthest from your workstation
- Use the stairs instead of the lift
- Take a 5 minute walking break
- When on the phone, stand or march on the spot or do calf-raises
- Use the furthest bathroom, preferably up or down stairs
- Take a walking meeting to brainstorm ideas with co-workers
- Bend, stretch, move, lift or carry whenever the opportunity arises
- Send printing jobs to the printer at the furthest point away from your workstation
- Offer to take the post and fit a walk in to your day

How far can you walk?

Take place in our 'Best Foot Forward' Pedometer Challenge

What better way than to kick off a new workplace health and well-being programme than with a bit of HEALTHY competition! How many steps can your team walk? Enough to get to the next town or city? Maybe even America? Or even to the moon and back! The pedometer challenge is a great way to have fun whilst increasing the amount of activity you do.

Compete against other Wakefield based organisations taking part and show us what you are made of! There will also be prizes awarded to the winning teams to give you that extra motivation. For further information or to register your team and receive your pedometer challenge pack, please contact Gemma on 01 274 355600 or email gemma@royds.org.uk

Remember winning isn't everything...it's the only thing!



Eligibility Criteria:

Companies with between five and 250 employees.
Postcode must be in WF1, WF2, WF8, WF9 or WF10 areas.

Aims of Project

Improve health and well-being of Wakefield District businesses with a view to reducing absence, increase employee engagement and productivity as well as secure a healthier community.

What do companies have to do?

Baseline questionnaire leads to HMB Team producing statistical information for MD/ Senior Management team along with recommendations. MD decides which they wish to take forward and HMB team develop a company action plan. This is monitored monthly and then formally reviewed after six months.

Examples of help provided

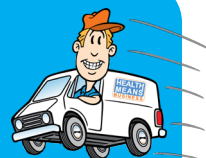
- Advice on healthy eating
- Simple ways to get active
- Smoking cessation
- MOTs/Healthchecks
- Reduced gym costs
- Tai Chi
- Reiki/Head Massage
- Discount on sports clothes and equipment
- Raising awareness/signposting to local NHS healthy lifestyle services
- Assistance developing Health & Safety procedures.

HMB GOES UK-WIDE

Health Means Business is a free service to organisations in Wakefield but our team can also work outside of the area, in fact we can cover the whole of the UK.

This is on a fee-paying basis but costs can be easily recouped by the money saved on sick pay, downtime and absenteeism!

For more information on how we can help throughout the UK please call Lisa Burnett on 07990 556833.



For more information contact:

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