

WIC WELLNESS WORKS

Ready, Set, GO!

Jump Start Your Team's New Year's Resolutions!



Ready, set, GO! The New Year is a great time to make positive changes in our lives. It's easy to get stuck in old habits and behaviors. Often, that's because we just don't know where to begin in moving our resolutions to reality. The good news is: with the right planning and a positive mindset, healthy changes are closer than you think!

Take the 30 Day Wellness Challenge!

Support your co-workers in their efforts to live healthfully this coming year by energizing them with clinic wellness activities. Gather your staff, review the steps below, select one area to focus on (healthy eating, physical activity, or stress management - or all three!), and brainstorm activities that will challenge your staff for the next **30 days**.

Together with your co-workers, try using the five steps below to set and achieve your group goals.

1 set Realistic GOALS:

As your staff works together in setting clinic goals, make sure that the time frame and goals your group has chosen are realistic. For instance, if your clinic goal is to start exercising together as a group, choose a type of exercise and time of day that is inclusive for all who want to participate.

2 WRITE it DOWN:

Research shows that those who write their goals down are more likely to achieve them. This can also help you decide what you want to achieve, and create accountability for follow through. As your staff brainstorms ways of increasing their healthy behaviors, have one person act as "note taker" and record the group's goals and action steps.

3 BREAK it DOWN:

Breaking goals down into smaller, more achievable steps can make the difference in whether you embrace or abandon your goals. As you brainstorm goals and action steps with your team, consider how you can break those down into smaller, more achievable steps.

4 make GOALS SPECIFIC:

When goals are not defined, they often aren't met. For example, saying "We're going to exercise once a week as a group" leaves room for confusion or communication breakdowns. By choosing a specific goal, "We want to walk for 15 minutes before work on Thursdays," everyone knows exactly what has been agreed upon. Creating action steps can aid in making things happen!

5 BE FLEXIBLE:

Expect the unexpected. Be flexible in the planning and implementation of your group's goals. For instance, you may try a "healthy treat rotation" at your clinic but then find that it doesn't match up with the staff's schedule. Rather than give up on the idea, tweak and rework it until a solution is created. Most importantly, expect bumps in the road as a normal part of moving toward change.

WELLNESS IDEAS

As a group, brainstorm ideas that you and your co-workers can aim to achieve together for the next **30 days**. Here are some options to consider:

WE WANT TO EAT HEALTHIER AT WORK:

Basket Full of Goodies: Ask co-workers to bring a variety of fruit on a designated day each week (try Monday so you have the whole week to enjoy the goodies). Place a large basket in the break room and let co-workers fill it up and take what they want for a healthy mid-day snack. Or assign each participating co-worker a different day so you will have a variety of fresh fruits available all week long.

Clinic Build a Salad: It's potluck salad day! Once a week, each co-worker brings in one salad ingredient to build a salad so that everyone can share a healthy lunch together. Make sure someone brings a low-fat salad dressing.

Happy Hour: Celebrate the end of each week with a Smoothie Happy Hour. Ask co-workers to bring strawberries, bananas, apple juice, different flavors of low-fat yogurt along with peaches, raspberries, etc... and mix up a healthy drink to end the week.

Snack Attack: Pair up co-workers to share healthy afternoon snacks during this month. See who is the most creative with what they bring!



WE WANT TO BE MORE ACTIVE AT WORK:

Getting Stronger Every Day: As a group, focus on a different muscle group each week and exercise that muscle group three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). For example, week one, work out the arms and chest, week two, abs and back, week three, quadriceps and buttocks, and week four, hamstrings and calf. Go to Mayoclinic.com for demonstrations of safe exercises. Use canned goods and/or tubing to enhance the workout.

"The Team That Walks Together...": Establish one day a week that everyone will walk as a group over lunch for 10 - 20 minutes. Establish a loop so employees can choose the distance they want to walk that day. Employees can keep track of the loops they complete and post it on a bulletin board to motivate them (and others) to keep going!

Every Time a Bell Rings...Get Active! When the telephone rings, employees stand up and march in place for 15 to 30 seconds. If the clinic phones are constantly ringing, you might need to do this for a specified amount of time and not all day.



WELLNESS IDEAS

WE WANT TO MANAGE OUR STRESS AT WORK:

Kick off the New Year with your colleagues by working together to minimize stress and create a positive work atmosphere. Try as many of the activities listed below during the next 30 days as possible and remember – the more you do them, the better you and your coworkers will feel!

Relax Those Muscles: Tension often builds first in our neck and shoulders, particularly when we spend a lot of time sitting or in the same position. Try these team strategies for reducing muscle tension while at work:

- Have tennis balls available so staff can roll them across each other's back to relieve stress.
- Start and end the day with a group stretch - see if you can fit a stretch in at lunch too.
- Begin/end meetings with a group stretch and deep breaths. Breathing from the abdomen (rather than the chest) slows blood pressure and heart rate, and gets oxygen flowing to the muscles (which reduces tension). Ask co-workers to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. They can also place their hand on their stomach to make sure they are breathing deeply into the abdomen. With each deep breath – calm flows in and stress goes out!



Do Something Positive Together! Did you know that showing kindness can increase workplace morale? This effect can be contagious when kindness activities are performed as a group. Try at least one of these ideas over the next 30 days:

- Organize a kindness cause by giving to groups or individuals in your community.
- Challenge everyone to do at least one or two kind acts at work daily and to “pass it on” at home.
- Brainstorm a kindness list at a staff meeting; include ways of being kind to colleagues and clients.

Research shows that those who regularly do acts of kindness have a higher level of job and life satisfaction, fewer days missed from work, and greater productivity. Kindness – pass it on in 2011!

Beautify Your Environment! When your work space is cluttered, disorganized, or unappealing, it can trigger stress and negative emotion. Together with your co-workers, come up with ways you can improve your clinic environment. Over the next month, try out these tips:

- Add comforts or visual appeal to your staff and/or waiting room (e.g., attractive posters, curtains, magazines).
- Have a staff sign-up sheet to bring in plants, flowers, or fruit.
- Re-organize a cluttered work area.

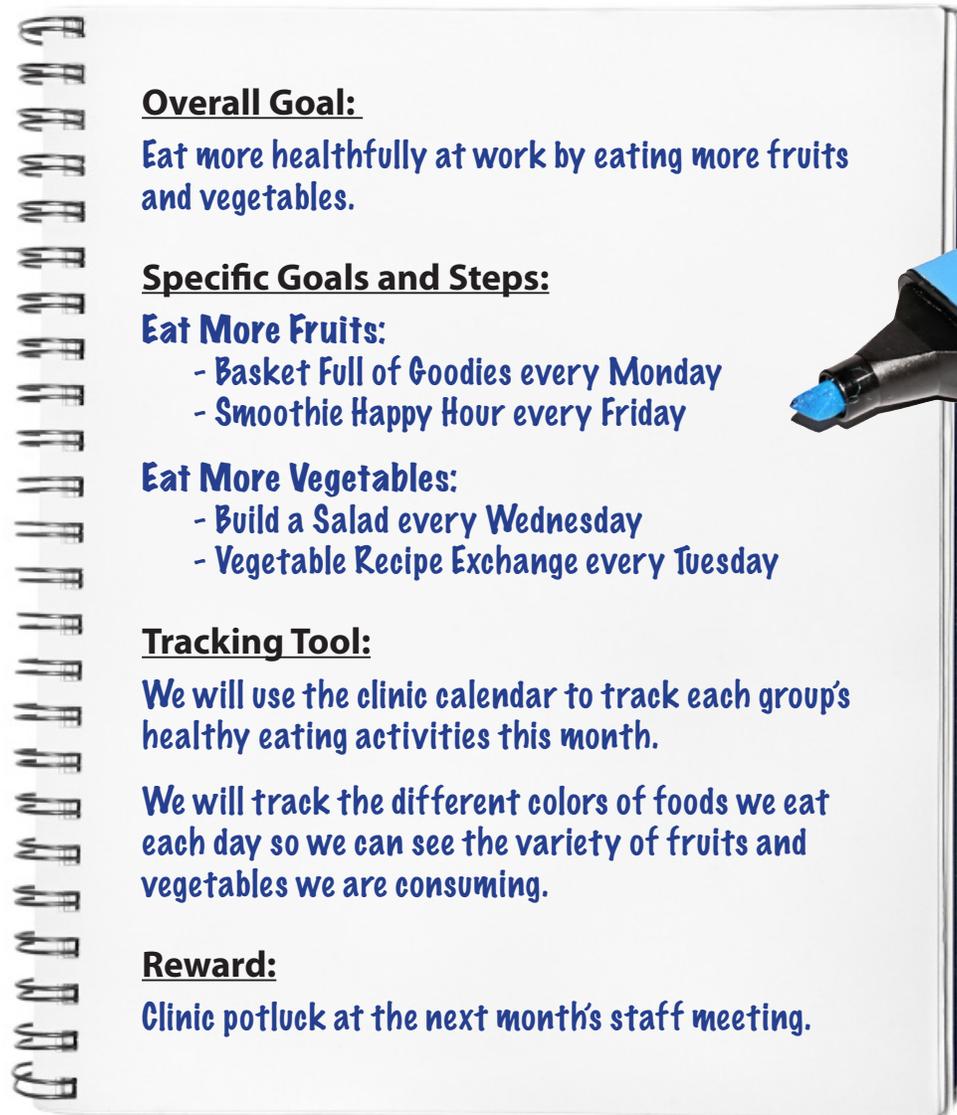
Not only will you and your staff benefit from a more attractive, organized clinic, but your clients will enjoy it too!



Goal setting

Use the next section to guide your clinic's goal setting process. Make copies for everyone or transfer the outline to a flip chart. Remember to brainstorm ideas before selecting one that works for your clinic. Your clinic may select more than one area to focus on and make sure to include "fun" in your plan!

Here is an example of what the goal setting process might look like:



Good luck, have fun, and please keep us posted on your clinic activities by contacting The UT-Austin Wellness Team at: UTWellness@austin.utexas.edu

Clinic Goal Setting Worksheet

Take the 30 Day Wellness Challenge: Ready, Set, Go!

Use this worksheet to record your clinic's goal(s), action steps and how you will reward yourselves at the end of the 30 days. Have fun and good luck!

Overall Goal:

Specific Goals and Steps:

Tracking Tool:

Reward: