

Your step-by-step guide to planning a successful wellness fair



How do fairs put wellness to work?

Wellness fairs give you the opportunity to reach out to your employees and show them how much you care about their health and well-being. Your wellness fair can include:

- Fun activities and demos, such as healthy cooking, yoga and first aid
- Health screenings, such as blood pressure, body mass index and cholesterol
- Flu shots
- Expert speakers

The wellness fair is also the perfect opportunity to educate your employees about programs offered in their community or at work through your health care plan or benefits.



Step 1: Put your plan in motion

Set up a planning committee so responsibilities don't all fall on your human resources department. Mix it up and get employees from different departments and levels. The committee will vary in size, depending how big your company is and how big you want to make your wellness fair. Assign duties and roles of the committee, which may include:

- Setting goals
- Coming up with a theme
- Choosing a date and deciding how to promote the event
- Nailing down activities
- Deciding if food and drinks will be served at the event
- Coming up with potential sponsors, volunteers, vendors and exhibitors
- Staffing and supporting the fair on day of the event



Bright idea #1

When putting together a plan, consider these points:

- How big do you want your event?
- Who will you invite?
- Do you need waiver forms?
- Do you need prior approval from management or legal counsel?



Step 2: Keep your eye on the prize

Before you kick off your wellness fair, you need to set your goals. What do you want your employees to take away from the event? Are you using the information to launch a wellness campaign or do you want to get information that will help you plan for next year? You'll also need to decide who your target audience is — do you want it to be just for employees or do you want their dependents to attend also? Consider asking your employees to fill out a wellness survey to determine interest and help you plan better.

Other goals to keep in mind:

- Boost personal health awareness
- Offer health screenings and educational material
- Motivate behavioral changes
- Increase knowledge of employee benefits and support open enrollment activities
- Increase knowledge of community resources



Step 3: Decide on a budget and location

How much you spend on your wellness fair will vary based on the number of participants, the size of the event and what activities you offer. Don't let a limited budget discourage you. Tap into resources within your company and your community. Base your budget on vendor costs and costs related to screenings, demo equipment, displays, promotions and communications. Consider incentives, such as discounts for joining a gym, or offer door prizes for employees who participate in the wellness fair. Ask vendors for donations to help foot the bill.

Choose a location that fits into your budget as well. Think about the supplies and setup items you'll need, such as chairs, tables and tablecloths.



Bright idea #2

**Boost employee attendance by offering giveaways or cash incentives.
Raffle off larger, high-cost items or hand out small tokens at the door.**



Step 4: Get vendors lined up

Once you've chosen a site and set your goals, you need to identify the vendors you want to take part in the fair. It's important to approach these vendors as early as you can. Contact local organizations that may want to promote local services.

- Local chapters of the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society and other organizations focused on improving health
- Hospitals
- Gyms/fitness centers
- Farm co-ops
- Massage therapists
- Local chiropractor, nutritionist, health food stores

Empire BlueCross BlueShield (Empire) also offers on-site flu clinics, biometric screenings, massage therapy services and education seminars. Talk to your account representative or broker to learn more.



Bright idea #3

When choosing a theme, it may help to survey your employees. You can also:

- Look into your organization's health risks and tailor activities to them.
- Check with your Empire representative to help identify your organization's risks based on paid claims.
- Review lists of national health observances. For example, November is American Diabetes Month.

The power of promotion

Get the word out ahead of time. That's the best way to get your employees interested in the wellness fair. Start with what you know works well in getting their attention. Think about using:

- Email messages
- Paycheck stuffers
- Company Intranet
- Fliers on your employees' desks or workstations
- Posters in break rooms, restrooms and elevators
- Company newsletter
- Screensavers on computers
- Managers and supervisors to communicate



Step 5: Communicate early and often

Promoting your event creates enthusiasm for participation. Using various communication methods for early promotion will get more employees on board.

Encourage employees to schedule the wellness fair on their calendars as they would any other appointment or meeting. This is especially important when:

- Organizing screenings or other events that may require your employees to register in advance.
- Coordinating schedules with managers and teammates to ensure work projects are covered.
- Encouraging work-at-home employees to fit time in to attend the event in person.

Make sure to keep vendors in the loop as well. Create and send a vendor registration form to keep track of vendor participation. Let them know about set-up times and their responsibilities. Make sure they know how many attendees to anticipate. After the event, send a thank-you note.



Bright idea #4

You may choose to educate your employees about Empire's resources and tools such as:

- Future Moms
- LiveHealth Online
- 24/7 NurseLine

Getting ready



• Six months in advance

- Get approval to hold the wellness fair and decide on the budget.
- Choose the dates and locations for the event.
- Assign tasks for planning and carrying out the event.
- If you're having other services at the wellness fair, such as health screenings, therapeutic massage or flu shots, Empire offers access to a variety of Worksite Wellness services that are great complements to wellness fairs. Contact your Empire representative for more information.

• Three to six months in advance

- Finalize event details including booths, activities, guest speakers (including management) and agenda.
- Decide communications schedule and begin to develop messages. If you're creating signs or custom promotions, start these before you begin electronic communications.
- If you're using vendors, be sure you understand all timelines they have given you.
- Order giveaways, if applicable.

• Two to three months in advance

- Finalize communications schedule.
- Send a save-the-date note. We recommend the first communication come from senior management.
- If your wellness fair is being held outdoors, be sure you have a plan B if the weather is bad.

• Six weeks to one month in advance

- Hang posters and fliers, and send any direct mail.
- Post event details on your company Intranet pages.
- Start holding weekly meetings with the project team.
- Meet with security to make sure visitors who are helping with the event have access to the building.

• Three weeks in advance

- Send an email to all employees.
- Be sure to let employees know about any incentives or prizes they can get if they attend.

• One week in advance

- Send another email to all employees. Reinforce the message about any incentives or prizes they can get if they attend.
- Order refreshments, if applicable.



Step 6: Tie up loose ends

Some other things to consider for your wellness fair are:

- **Make sure vendors and volunteers are easy to recognize:** Consider name tags or t-shirts for the day of the event.
- **Is your population bilingual?** Let your vendors know if you need bilingual (Spanish- and English-speaking) event staff. Print promotional materials in English and Spanish.
- **Do your employees work varying shifts?** You'll want to ensure your wellness fair is held at a time that allows different shifts to take part.
- **Will your event be inside or outside?** We suggest holding your event indoors. If you want or need to hold it outside, let your vendors know. It could require extra work.
- **Have your planning committee meet** the week of the event and assign task for any last-minute needs.



Step 7: Assess for success

Use feedback forms to measure the success of your wellness fair. Gather feedback from your employees, vendors and your committee members. This will help you determine event strengths and weaknesses. Use specific questions in a follow-up survey to see what motivated your employees to attend and what activities they found interesting.

Your employees spend more than half of their waking hours on the job. Workplace wellness fairs are a fun and healthy way to give them a break from the daily grind. At these events, employees can learn more about their health and what they can do to improve it. They can also find out about programs available through their health plan and in their community that can help them meet their health goals. Start planning your wellness fair today.

We're here to help you make your wellness fair a success. If you'd like more information, please contact your Empire Sales representative.

