



# How to Cultivate a Culture of High-Engagement **Preventive Health**

EHE HEALTH   
The Original Prevention Network.

Company leaders, CHROs, and the like are in a unique position to positively affect their employees' lives five out of seven days a week. Research into the benefits of preventive health and its impact on organizational culture has provided a set of clear opportunities that any organization can embrace to grow a workforce that is healthy and happy.

*The issue is engagement. How do you provide the preventative measures, make your employees aware of their options, and educate them on how to use these to their full measure?*

## The costs of ignoring the signs

Before approaching the issue of engagement, some employers will need convincing that the challenge is theirs to take on. Not all organizations take the same level of responsibility for their employee's health outcomes. While health benefits are part of most packages, the depth of coverage to include preventive health services at the CDC recommended standard of care is not widely included.

But employees spend one-third of their lives at the workplace. In higher-paying jobs, it can be up to half their life. **Therefore, if the health standard is low, it can quickly impact your employees' quality of life.**

According to the CDC, while the employee impact is clear, it also negatively impacts businesses. Five chronic diseases and risk factors are negatively impacted or caused by chronic stress. These cost U.S. employers around \$36 billion a year due to employees missing work from factors such as:



High Blood  
Pressure



Obesity



Diabetes



Constant  
Inactivity



Smoking

Altogether, this means that supporting your employees' overall health also benefits the financial success of your business.



## The state of employee well-being

Organizations that have the most sustained success with employee engagement in preventive health strategies begin with understanding where they are to be able to reach them. This can include your employees' state of mind, how they approach their work and any other areas of their life that might be challenging their engagement, such as family commitments.

A recent survey from 2021 found that 80% of employees feel stressed because of their job. While stress isn't an entirely negative emotion, it becomes negative quickly when not managed correctly. Unfortunately, workplace stress has long been considered a normal part of doing business, and higher-paid jobs often equate to higher stress levels. Additionally, stress levels also correlate to decreased levels of job satisfaction.



**21%**  
of employees feel  
supported in their  
physical well-being



**80%**  
of employees report  
experiencing work-  
related stress



**50%**  
of employees say they  
need help and don't  
know where to get it

What is most revealing for employers is that almost 50% of all the polled employees across sectors said they need help to learn how to manage stress and don't know where to get that help. *This is where employers can jump in to help fill these gaps.*

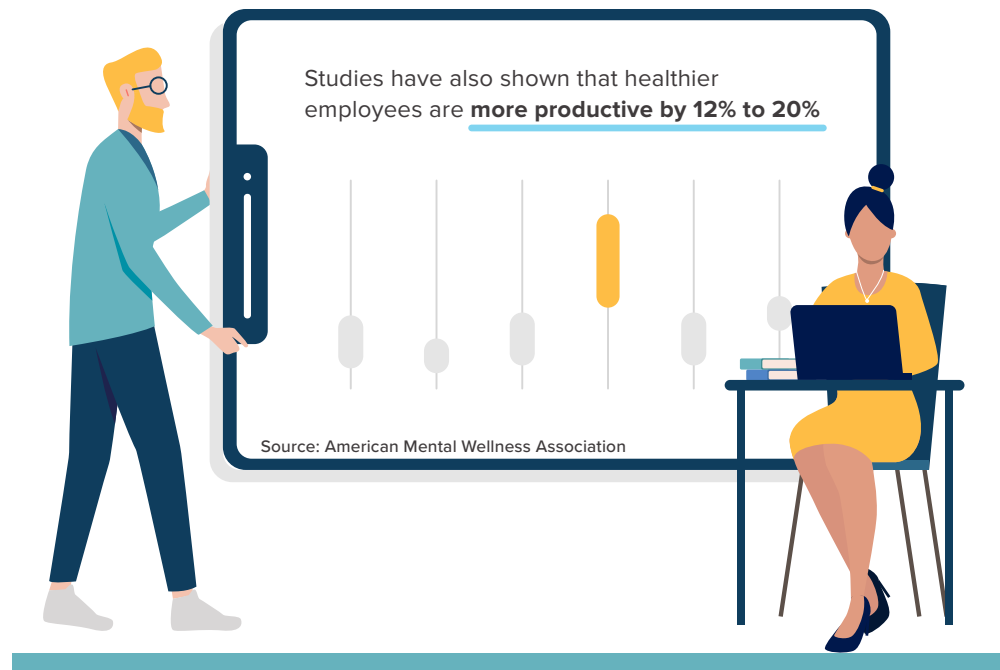
Why do organizations prioritize stress management for their employees as part of the preventive health strategy? Studies show that short-term stressors can boost the immune system. In other words, well-managed stress can be a good thing. Chronic stress goes the other way, wreaking significant havoc on the immune system that can eventually lead to illness. The longer it goes on, the more likely a chronic condition becomes.

Employees often feel like they lack education and support when managing their health. According to a 2021 study by SHRM, only 21% of employees globally feel supported at work in their physical well-being. Whether an employee feels supported affects their job satisfaction and overall well-being, which can bleed into other areas, such as home life.

## What preventive care offers employees

Employee preventative care can look pretty different from company to company. Preventive healthcare commonly includes access to a robust annual health screening, immunizations such as flu shots, and even vaccinations for the rest of their family. Specific tests and screenings are often offered to help people manage common conditions that can worsen if not monitored well.

Historically, preventive care has focused primarily on the physical. But the Covid-19 pandemic also brought mental and emotional well-being to the forefront. Now, preventative care might also include convenient access to therapy and educational resources to educate employees on mental well-being.



### Why preventive care at scale is a focus for employers now

Preventative care has always helped doctors detect heart disease, cancers, diabetes, and early-onset functional disorders. The earlier you identify an issue, the more a healthcare team can do to treat it. But the global pandemic of the past 2+ years adds another level of urgency with millions of patients missing their screenings. Now, self-insured employers have a window of opportunity to start a meaningful intervention that can significantly reduce catastrophic claims that are already predicted to rise.

The more people know about and understand their health profile, the fewer sick days they are likely to use. **Healthier employees are often happier employees, leading to decreased turnover rates.**

## Tips for engaging employees in preventive health

Now that you understand the **importance** of focusing on employee health, what can you do about it? Try these actionable strategies to create a more robust and beneficial preventive health program.



### Tip #1: Offer a preventive healthcare benefit

We all know that healthcare costs money, so many people ignore their health until something is wrong. But when preventative healthcare is offered as part of an employee's benefits package, it becomes accessible—and hence, more affordable—to everyone.

In addition to wellness screenings and vaccinations, you can also offer virtual consultations during work hours to make it even more convenient, especially for those with little personal time outside of work. **EHE offers convenient virtual consultations that help employees better manage their time, helping you support their health and wellness.**

### Tip #2: Increase health awareness

Lack of knowledge about preventive healthcare availability is a common problem. Yet it's arguably one in which employers can have the most impact. First, make your teams aware of your preventive health benefits. Send regular email reminders, or put up posters at key times of the year to remind them of free flu vaccinations and when annual checkups are covered.

Next, make sure your employees know how to maximize these benefits. Promote the advantages of preventive screenings and well visits before they feel sick and dispel common misconceptions that vaccinations are only for those with compromised immune systems.

You can do this by hosting vaccination clinics or workshops where healthcare professionals can address any fears and educate your staff about the kinds of conditions annual check-ups can help prevent.

### Tip #3: Use social networks to encourage preventative health

While posters and notices around the office can help in a physical office space, you might have hybrid or entirely remote employees. In this case, the presence of these physical notices is less effective. It's also easy to glance over something that has been up for months instead of functioning as a tangible reminder.



Luckily, social media usage is only ever increasing in a burgeoning technologically-based society. Encourage your employees to follow your company's accounts on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. You can even incentivize their following of the accounts with intermittent raffles. You might also consider having an employee-only company social media account. That way, you can better guarantee that they will see employee-specific posts regarding reminders to get vaccinations at particular times of the year or to make them aware of health workshops you put on.

### Tip #4: Make it convenient and private



The more convenient you can make your healthcare benefits, the more likely your employees will use them. Many people will think that they will have time for a screening later or don't have time to attend that mental health workshop even if they feel like it could be of some use. This is one of the significant challenges for preventive care, the idea that someone is fine until diagnosed.

Show your employees that you care about their preventative care by making it easy for them to engage with those benefits. You can do this by hosting an in-house vaccination clinic that people can attend during the workday. You could even offer pre-determined appointment slots with a nearby clinic so employees don't have to take personal time to get a check-up.

The other aspect of this to keep in mind is the individual privacy of each person. Health is often something people feel embarrassed about or want to keep firmly in their personal lives. If you decide to host something at your workplace, then make the protection of privacy a priority and also ensure that your employees are aware of the measures you have taken to protect them.

### Tip #5: Remember well-being is not individualistic within home settings

If someone's home is not a healthy place, they will likely not be healthy people. If they have a family, consider offering a healthcare package that includes preventative care for their kids and spouse. Not all of the preventive benefits might extend to the entire family. However, it is often easier to make things like vaccinations available to the family and decrease the likelihood of your employees getting sick from their family members.

Another aspect you might consider is making employees aware of helplines or people to speak to if they feel unsafe within their home setting. For example, you can increase their awareness of helplines for victims of domestic abuse to protect their privacy and increase their quality of life and day-to-day safety.

## Tip #6: Incentivize preventive healthcare

Convenience isn't the only way to get your employees to engage with preventive health benefits. Another effective method you can use is to create an incentive program for certain aspects of preventive care. This is especially useful if you don't have the option to offer available clinics during the working day, therefore decreasing the convenience of the benefits.

Instead, use incentives to encourage people to utilize their benefits even if they have to do so outside of work hours. These are typically financial incentives, such as bonuses for those that get their vaccinations on time each year. You can work these into your whole program and add additional incentives for each preventive health benefit an employee uses or even incentives for the things they do outside of the offered health benefits package.



## Tip #7: Financial incentives alone won't drive attention

Some businesses have begun to rely on incentive programs to get their employees to participate in preventive care. However, this can begin to take the focus away from the importance of employees' overall well-being and focus on the financial benefit of their participation. Focus on the importance of overall health, mitigating risk through preventive care, and the benefits of taking care of their health to their family and personal lives.

Additionally, suppose budget cuts need to occur. In that case, it can have an even more significant impact on the rate of participation and employee satisfaction with both the job and the healthcare benefits. When the focus shifts from an appreciation of self-care to an appreciation of their wallet, your participation percentage will only ever reflect the number of incentives.

That being said, *incentives should only be part of a preventive care strategy, not the entire strategy.* Instead, you might only incentivize core preventive aspects, such as proving a yearly vaccination record or getting an annual check-up. Another option is to do a raffle instead of straight incentives. A raffle helps draw more attention to the strategy while only offering the possibility of incentive remuneration. Combined with the right marketing, this will help you keep the focus on the importance of healthcare instead of the importance of the dollar.



## Tip #8: Design a participatory wellness program with a focal point on prevention

Whatever incentive program you decide to incorporate to motivate your employees, or the convenience you work in should all be part of a larger strategy. Creating a wellness program is one of the best ways to measure the success and use of preventive health measures.

**A participatory wellness scheme is essential.** It can increase office relationships and camaraderie while working to increase the general health of employees in the office. Beyond raffle or incentive programs, you can encourage physical movement in and around the office. For example, have a designated walking space in a break area or host a competition for those who hit a step goal most during the month. You might even host walks outside of office hours for those who find it challenging to motivate themselves independently. Encouraging simple activities like walking addresses issues like cardiovascular health, obesity, and even symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Mental health seminars hold a valuable place in a company's wellness program. They make employees more aware of health symptoms, the value of health checks, and how to deal with certain health concerns. Make them very apparent by posting them on company forums or social media accounts.

Finally, prioritize healthy break times and habits. The day-to-day work-life is just as essential as the annual check-up or vaccination. Have a breakroom with plenty of natural light or one outdoors accessible from the office building.



## The Original Prevention Network

EHE Health offers the difference you need. Our premium preventive exam can give you customized insights you won't normally get through primary care. EHE Health members have access to invaluable resources, including one-on-one health mentorships with preventive health professionals. Let EHE's experts help your teams reach their health goals! Contact EHE Health today to learn how.

Get in touch at <https://ehe.health/for-employers/> or call **844-943-1496**