

Looking after South Africa's workforce

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) endorses the importance of Employee Wellness Week from 2 July - 6 July. We encourage all employers in the public sector to invest in the health and wellbeing of their employees by being proactive in reducing the negative effects of stress and increasing productivity.

Lifestyle implications on health

As individuals we can act on reducing risk factors which put us at risk for heart disease and stroke - cardiovascular disease (CVD) by getting our health risk assessments (HRA's) done. HRA's include blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body mass index readings. Mostly these risk factors are preventable and or modifiable even in the face of a family history of CVD. 80% of heart disease and strokes are preventable - poor lifestyle choices and behaviours play an important role in the development of heart disease and stroke.

The HSFSA adopts a proactive health promotion and disease prevention approach to managing illness and overall health in the workplace and is considered to be an active process of becoming aware of and learning to make healthy choices. 80% of heart diseases and strokes are preventable - poor lifestyle choices and behaviours play an important role in the development of heart and stroke disease.

How important is wellness at work?

A healthy workforce is a productive workforce and the benefits of being proactive to lower the risk of occupation conditions should be at the top of any employers priority list. Employers who invest in the wellbeing of employees are seen as caring and affects the morale of staff which can have a positive effect like lower absenteeism and lower risk of disability and lifestyle diseases.

Health is still an individual responsibility.

We can only be as healthy as our habits. The good news is that it's never too late to make those changes, no matter how small. We have **7 easy tips to improve your health at work:**

1. Step up! Opt for the stairs instead of the elevator – it's a great way to work towards 150 minutes per week recommended for an adult
2. Take lunch walks especially if you have a sedentary position, this will help to refocus and energise your body and mind
3. Experience yoga for physical, mental, and spiritual rejuvenation. It increases muscle strength, muscle tone, and flexibility
4. Stay hydrated! Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. Infuse with fruit or try sugar free [Ice-Tea](#) as an alternative.
5. Snack well! Choose to snack on fruit or unsweetened yoghurt as well as unsalted nuts or and fresh cut veggies during your work day instead of crisps and chocolates
6. Laugh! Don't allow work to become mundane, take time to share a joke with a colleague during your lunch time walk or laugh at an email. Laughter is a great stress reliever
7. Encourage your employer to promote healthier options in company canteens and vending machines by not only offering salt and sugar laden snacks

Help is available

The HSFSA offers a comprehensive Employee Wellness Programme to help employees understand that being healthy is not about a diet, but rather about long term habits which are a lifestyle. Our Health Promotion Officers relay health education presentations; full or tailored health risk assessments which include testing of blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, and body mass index; and health information tables. For more information please visit www.heartfoundation.co.za or call our Health Promotions Manager, Dana Govender on 031-2619055.

Ends

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Contact to book your Employee Wellness Day

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About the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) plays a leading role in the fight against preventable heart disease and stroke, with the aim of seeing fewer people in South Africa suffer premature deaths and disabilities. The HSFSA, established in 1980 is a non-governmental, non-profit organization which relies on external funding to sustain the work it carries out.

The HSFSA aims to reduce the cardiovascular disease (CVD) burden in South Africa and ultimately on the health care system of South Africa. Our mission is to empower people in South Africa to adopt healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices easier, seek appropriate care and encourage prevention.

