



VEG OUT & POWER ON

BLOG #3: BRINGING PLANT FORWARD TO THE WORKPLACE

Did you know, the average person will spend about 80,000 hours working throughout their lives? Many of us start working at an early stage in life, holding part time jobs during college term. Your workplace is an ideal location to promote your own physical and mental health. It's no secret that we work in a fast paced world, with not only work related responsibilities, but we are being pulled at all angles with home life, college life and other every day challenges.

Over exertion can leave us feeling tired and lacking in energy. Employee wellbeing has been shown to link with workers productivity. Making correct nutritional choices in work is essential due to the fact that so much of your waking time is spent there.

Stress and eating habits

Feelings of stress can leave you feeling run down, meaning healthy eating habits and lifestyle patterns can fall by the wayside. Research has found individual differences in food intake as a response to stress*. Roughly 40% of people were found to increase and 40% decrease their caloric intake when stressed.

*Torres SJ, Nowson CA. Relationship between stress, eating behaviour, and obesity. Nutrition. 2007; 23(11-12):887-94.

Stress hormones are linked to your body's appetite regulation. During the acute or initial stage of stress, your body releases a hormone called adrenalin- which reduces your appetite. However, later on, it releases cortisol. Cortisol is a stress hormone associated with stress induced weight gain as it alters your blood sugar levels, which in turn stimulates your appetite. By managing your stress, you can manage your cortisol and hence manage your weight.

This month, our Healthy for Life campaign focus is on plant-forward. Why not adopt a plant forward approach in the workplace or on your college campus? Our tips will help you adopt a healthier lifestyle at home, in college and in the workplace, benefitting both you and the environment!

Veg out and power on

Only 8% of teenagers and 1 in 3 adults meet the recommended intake of 5-7 80g portions of fruit and vegetables per day. Discover the power of putting plants on your plate: fruit and vegetables are low calorie, rich in vitamins, minerals and phy-

tochemicals. Eat a variety of colours of fruit and vegetables to get the most benefit. Ideal workplace snacks include vegetable crudités, fruit salad or slices, whole fruit or smoothies.

Reduce consumption of processed foods

Choose whole foods which are minimally processed. Processed foods such as ham, sausages, salami, rashers, ready meals, packet sauces are all highly processed and are also high in fat, sugar and salt which lead to negative health effects.

Drink freshwater and use reusable bottles

Keeping well hydrated is key, particularly in work to aid concentration. Instead of buying a new bottle of water every day, why not get a reusable bottle and refill it yourself daily. This will save you cash as well as reduce plastic waste. Predictions suggest that water is likely to be the scarcest natural resource in years to come.

Meatless Mondays

Meat and dairy products are the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, with agriculture accounting for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union. Could you moderate your meat intake by switching to plant based proteins once a week and include more peas, beans and pulses? By moderating our meat intake (through meat free meals or smaller portions in line with recommended portion sizes of 50-75g cooked meat) you can reap the health benefits of a lower intake of saturated fat and salt. Why not look out for the vegan and vegetarian options featured in our restaurant menus.

Become aware of portion sizes

The United Nations reported that one third of food for human consumption is wasted each year. If you consider the energy processes involved in the production of a meal, this energy is wasted if the food is thrown away! Think about portion control whether you are ordering out or preparing food at home. For more info on portion control check out the Food Pyramid (Ireland) or the Eatwell guide (UK).

Keep active

Exercise and physical activity have been shown to reduce stress and positively affect mental wellbeing. Why not incorporate exercise into your working day by cycling/ walking to work, getting off the bus a few stops early or even taking the stairs instead of the elevator.

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