

# Free report on well and safe

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Lifestyle choices take a significant toll on health care costs in the United States. Laretta Claussen, in the May 2009 edition of Safety + Health discusses the modest corporate attempts at lifestyle modification and the impact on their employees health. It is believed that nearly 87.5% of medical costs are related to lifestyle choices such as smoking, eating, and exercise habits. In her report on programs initiated at the corporate level for employee fitness, she cites far-reaching success of these programs in tackling morbidity.

The report relies on anecdotal evidence from human resource managers of large corporations. At Great Omaha Packing Co., a vice president initiated health fairs after hearing about an employee dying due to diabetes mismanagement. The health fair was tailored to their own corporate culture and this was a key part of the success of the program. The company reflected upon its workforce and due to the fact that it was largely South American, and there was a culture of passing Sundays with the family, the fairs were organized on Sundays. This served the purpose of bringing the families into the healthcare fold as well, because spouses and children also have a healthcare cost on the company.

Another case that Claussen discusses is an UPS packing facility in California. UPS is an enormous corporation with over 425000 employees worldwide. The nature of the work, carrying packages that can be extremely heavy, requires that employees be physically fit, or face nasty injuries. The facility started out modestly by introducing a morning yoga class for the employees. It soon became very popular and had to be moved to larger facilities and was expanded to other UPS facilities. This laid the groundwork for the evolution

of a more comprehensive health care initiative that was implemented after. In sum, wellness programs initiated by companies have a positive impact on the health of employees and families. In turn, this saves the company significant money in absenteeism and direct health costs.

**Bibliography:**

Claussen, L. (2009, May). Well & Safe. *Safety + Health*, 52-55.