

# Employee survey: SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

## Notes

Use this questionnaire as a template, including only the questions that will provide the information you need.

Information on how to interpret the results of the questionnaire is provided on page 55.

The **Introduction** should:

- let the employee know what you are trying to find out from them and why
- tell them what you will do with their responses. Reassure them that all surveys are anonymous and that individuals will not be contacted directly
- tell them if you are offering any incentive to respond – for example, entering all responses into a prize draw
- tell them how their trade union representatives have been involved in the process of producing the questionnaire.

The aim of this section is to gain a baseline marker for employees' current eating habits. This information can be used in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of your workplace healthy eating programme.

Questions need to relate to the food and drink people consume in a typical week.

This section should:

- aim to ask questions about areas where the workplace can have some influence
- encourage employees to start thinking about their own health behaviour
- measure the employees' level of commitment to and enthusiasm for healthy eating
- identify potential barriers to changing dietary habits, particularly during the working day.

## Introduction

Do you want the opportunity to have your say in the development of a new healthy eating programme for employees? If so, please take a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire.

The information you provide will help us develop a programme to suit your needs.

Your participation is completely voluntary and all responses will be anonymous.

Please return the survey to:

## Your current eating habits

- 1 a)** During the last week, on how many days did you consume 5 portions or more of fruit and vegetables?

*Remember that fresh, frozen and tinned fruits and vegetables all count, but fruit juice and dried fruit only count as 1 portion per day each, regardless of the amount you have. Potatoes are counted as starchy foods, not as vegetables.*

On \_\_\_\_\_ days last week

- b)** During the last week, on how many days did you have a snack food or drink (other than water) during the working day?

*This includes, for example, fizzy drinks, fresh fruit, cakes and biscuits, sweets or crisps.*

On \_\_\_\_\_ days last week

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- c)** During the last week, on how many days did you have between 4 and 6 glasses or cups of fluid during the working day?  
*For example, water, tea, coffee, fruit juice or squash. The recommended daily fluid intake for the UK climate is 6-8 glasses, taken throughout the day, so it is important to drink throughout your working day.*

On \_\_\_\_\_ days last week

- d)** During the last week, on how many days did you have more than 2 to 3 units of alcohol if you are a woman, or more than 3 to 4 units of alcohol if you are a man?  
*For example, there is 1 unit of alcohol in: half a pint of standard beer, lager or cider (3% to 5% ABV), or in a pub measure of spirits. A large glass of wine is about 2 units and alcopops are about 1.5 units.*

On \_\_\_\_\_ days last week

**2** During the last week, on how many days did you:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| a) eat breakfast?   | On _____ days last week |
| b) skip lunch because of work commitments?                              | On _____ days           |
| c) eat and/or drink during a work meeting?                              | On _____ days           |
| d) take part in 'team-led' eating, eg, a biscuit bin or birthday cakes? | On _____ days           |
| e) use the vending machine at work?                                     | On _____ days           |
| f) bring your own lunch to work?  | On _____ days           |
| g) eat a meal at your desk?   | On _____ days           |
| h) stop to eat lunch with work colleagues?                              | On _____ days           |
| i) make use of the employee restaurant?                                 | On _____ days           |
| j) make use of the staff room to eat a meal?                            | On _____ days           |
| k) make use of employee areas for food preparation and/or storage?      | On _____ days           |
| l) buy family food shopping during your working day?                    | On _____ days           |

- 3 a)** At the moment, what prevents you from introducing more healthy foods into your diet?

*Tick whichever ones apply to you.*

- ☐ Special dietary needs
- ☐ Dislike of healthy foods
- ☐ Poor health
- ☐ Family commitments
- ☐ Family dietary preferences
- ☐ Cost of healthy foods
- ☐ Distance to supermarkets or food shops
- ☐ Work commitments
- ☐ Lack of nutritional knowledge
- ☐ Lack of cooking skills
- ☐ Lack of food storage and preparation areas in the workplace
- ☐ Lack of healthy eating choices at lunchtime or for snacks

Other (Please state.) \_\_\_\_\_

- b)** Which of the following best describes you?

*Please tick only ONE.*

- ☐ I am not interested in pursuing a healthy lifestyle.
- ☐ I have recently been thinking about changing my diet.
- ☐ I am intending to change my behaviour and to change my diet within the next six months.
- ☐ I have recently changed my behaviour and I am following a healthy eating plan.
- ☐ I have been following a healthy eating plan for at least six months.
- ☐ I have special dietary needs that prevent me from changing my diet.

The aim of this section is to gain an understanding of any special needs related to employees' health or medical conditions.

This section should:

- highlight any medical condition(s) that may affect an individual's ability to participate
- determine how the employee views his or her workplace to be related to their health and vice versa.

## Health needs

- 4** How would you describe your general health?

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor

- 5 a)** In the last 12 months, on roughly how many days have you been absent from work due to personal illness or injury?

\_\_\_\_\_

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**b)** Do you have any special dietary needs? *(Please state.)*

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**c)** Do you suffer from any long-term medical illnesses or conditions – for example, diabetes, high blood pressure, or stress?

☐ Yes

☐ No

**d)** If Yes, what long-term illness do you suffer from? *(Please state.)*

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**e)** Is this long-term condition the reason for most of your sickness absence?

☐ Yes

☐ No

**6** How would you describe the following when you are at work? *(Please tick.)*

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
Energy levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concentration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stress levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The aim of this section is to gain an understanding of employees' healthy eating interests. This will help to inform the development of the programme.

This section should:

- identify the types of activities that employees enjoy taking part in and how provision in the workplace can facilitate this
- determine employees' motivation for participating
- assess which healthy eating activities employees would most like to participate in at work and when.

## Healthy eating interests

**7 a)** If the following healthy eating initiatives were offered at work, how likely would you be to take part or use them?

	Extremely likely	Fairly likely	Undecided	Fairly likely	Extremely likely
Recipes and tips for healthy eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cookery classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition courses and qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talks, presentations and workshops on healthy eating by health professionals, dietitians or nutritionists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to health promotion materials such as leaflets and posters about healthy eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to weekly healthy eating messages via email and/or bulletin boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	Extremely likely	Fairly likely	Undecided	Fairly likely	Extremely likely
Access to drinking water for all employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free fruit in the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selection of healthy refreshments in meeting rooms – for example, water and fresh fruits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit and vegetable box delivery scheme with deliveries to the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-check facilities, eg, weighing scales and tape measures available in a private area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weight management programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and fitness assessments and/or health screening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health-related treatments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy breakfast bar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy meal choices available in the employee restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy sandwich or lunch delivery service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy meal options in the vending machines – for example, sandwiches, pasta, fresh fruit and yoghurts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy snack options available in the vending machines or snack bars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-site facilities, eg, food preparation and storage areas for employees' use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in local or national healthy eating events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team or individual 'Eat well!' challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- b)** When would you be most likely to make use of the services listed in question 7a?  
Please specify which of the above you would use at the following times:

Before work

During work

At lunchtime

After work

Weekends

## Notes

The aim of this section is to gain an understanding of employees' work habits and to identify opportunities for healthy eating within the working day.

If your employees work shifts, some of these questions will probably need to be adapted to re-adjust the focus away from lunchtime meals.

This section should:

- give an idea of the structure of the employee's normal working day
- provide employee details such as age and gender.

- 8** Please describe any workplace facilities that help you to eat healthily and that you use regularly (once a week or more).  
*For example, vending machines that offer healthy options, using a fridge at the workplace to store your healthy packed lunch, using a workplace kitchen to prepare food, using the canteen for healthy choices, or using information provided on healthy eating.*

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## Personal profile

Please provide some information about yourself.

- 9 a)** On average how many hours do you work each day?

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- b)** Does your work involve shift patterns outside 9am to 5pm?

☐ Yes

☐ No

- c)** In terms of physical effort, how would you describe your work? *(Please tick.)*

☐ Very demanding

☐ Fairly demanding

☐ Not very demanding

- 10** Are you...

☐ Male

☐ Female

- 11** Age group. *(Please tick the age group that applies to you.)*

☐ Under 21

☐ 21-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41-50

☐ 51-60

☐ Over 60

**12** Would you be interested in becoming involved in our healthy eating programme?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If Yes, in what ways do you think you could contribute?

(If you would like to contribute, please tell the person who is organising this survey.)

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**13** Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

*If you have any other ideas for how the workplace could be improved to support those wanting to make healthy eating choices that you would like to suggest, please let us know.*

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**THANK YOU FOR FILLING  
IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

**Your input will help us to ensure the success of the healthy eating programme!**

## Evaluating the responses to the employee survey

### Question 1

These questions have been included to provide you with a baseline that can be re-assessed at a later date to determine the impact of your healthy eating programme.

- 1a)** As a guide, only 27% of men and 33% of women in managerial and professional groups consume the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, and only 16% of men and 17% of women in routine and semi-routine occupations achieve the target.<sup>1</sup>
- 1b)** If a high percentage of staff snack during the day, consider ways in which you can encourage them to have healthier snacks.
- 1c)** 6-8 glasses or cups of fluid a day is the recommended amount of fluid intake for adults in the UK climate. If your employees are not drinking this amount, consider including a campaign that will encourage increasing fluid intake. (See the *Hydration challenge*, on page 128.)
- 1d)** This question gives the recommended allowances for sensible drinking. If your employees are not meeting these guidelines, consider including a sensible drinking campaign in your programme.

### Question 2

These questions have been included to help you identify ways in which you may be able to influence healthy eating choices within your workplace. For example, if a high percentage of employees make use of on-site lunch facilities, your next step could be to find out what level of interest there might be in introducing healthier choices.

### Question 3

These questions have been included to help you identify the obstacles that need to be overcome for individuals to make healthier choices. However, not all of the barriers can be changed in or through the workplace. Question 3b will help you find out how 'ready' people are for making changes to eat more healthily. You might want to concentrate programme efforts on those people.

### Questions 4 to 6

These questions will provide confidential information about the health needs of your employees. You will need to take the responses into account when you plan which actions to include in your healthy eating programme. For example, if you have a number of employees with particular food allergies, you might want to consider offering alternative options in vending machines.

### Questions 7 and 8

These questions have been included to assess the level of interest in activities that could be included in your workplace healthy eating programme.

### Question 9

These questions will help you identify working patterns that will need to be accommodated in your programme.

### Questions 10 and 11

These questions will help give you a profile your work colleagues.

### Questions 12 and 13

These questions provide employees with an opportunity to get involved in the programme and have their say in how it is developed. These comments can be very valuable at the start of a programme to identify employees who could make a very positive contribution to your programme.

## Reference

<sup>1</sup> Sproston K and Primates P. 2003. *Health Survey for England 2002*. London: TSO.

