Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Losing weight at work: my friends and co-workers just don't get it

There never seems to be a shortage of tempting goodies stationed somewhere at work. Whether it's cupcakes, chocolate, donuts or cookies, they're everywhere! And when you're trying to lose weight, these sweet temptations could be your downfall.



But there are other culprits trying to sabotage your weight loss efforts - your co-workers. If you get caught hovering over that plate of red velvet decadence for too long, without fail someone will appear to goad you into joining them for this one guilty pleasure. And if you don't join in, you run the risk of being left out.

Are my co-workers deliberately trying to sabotage my weight-loss goals?

Here are some tips to help keep you on track and committed to improving your health:

- **Arm yourself with healthy alternatives.** The best defense is a strong offense. If the workplace tradition involves donuts every Friday morning, bring your own healthy goodies to share alongside the donut box. For example, bring a basket of low-fat, pumpkin oatmeal muffins or some other yummy and healthy treat on Friday and contribute to creating a healthier tradition.

- **Download and customize take-out menus.** While it's smarter to bring your own lunch each day, there's something to be said about the occasional take-out or lunch out with your co-workers. That doesn't mean you have to load up on a big meal. Download and print nutritional menus from your co-workers' favourite restaurants. From there, highlight items that work for your diet and order only from your list of highlighted items. You could also use a dark marker to cross off unhealthy items to remove the temptation.

- **Say no to temptation.** Birthdays, baby showers, and other events are often celebrated with goodies. By all means, join the celebration but learn how to say no to the plate of cake pushed your way. Just because it's there, it doesn't mean you have to eat it. You don't need to explain yourself either – just a simple, "That looks delicious, but not today" will do.

- **Change your mindset.** You can't change your co-workers, but you can change your own mindset. Instead of thinking of your weight loss journey as a diet, think of it as a healthy living plan. When presented with a latte, ask yourself if that supports your healthy living plan or not. As you think about all those empty calories (not to mention the caffeine and added expense), you may conclude that no, that latte actually doesn't support your healthy living plan. You'll likely find that it's easier to say no once your own attitude towards dieting has been adjusted.

You are in charge of your health

Finally, remember that you are in charge of your health, not your friends or your co-workers. While it would be nice to have 100 per cent support and encouragement, not everyone will understand. Some

will support you, some will be inspired to join you, and others will continue to offer you donuts. How you respond is ultimately your choice and within your power. You can do it!

Did you know?

- Over 60 per cent of women in the United States are estimated to be overweight
- In Canada, two out of three men are overweight, and one-in-four adults is obese
- 54 per cent of American adult survey respondents reported that they were trying to lose weight
- Cultural reasons for obesity issues include larger portion sizes, reliance on cars rather than walking, and little time for exercise and cooking
- Canada's Food Guide can help you and your family learn about food groups, serving sizes, and making healthy food choices

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