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# well-being at work

The Eden Springs newsletter for the promotion of healthy habits at work

Issue 13 · February 2009

Study reveals

## Workers Want Employers to Care

In a recent international study investigating the relation between work, health and well-being, 70% of workers indicated that they would like their employer to do more to promote employee health. The study was conducted by Kelly Services, one of the world's leading companies in human resource solutions, and included 115,000 participants from 33 countries. Employees in Finland were the most demanding, with 96% believing employers should do more, followed by Italy, with 89%. American workers appear to be the least demanding of their employer, with only 48%

expecting their employer to take an active role in their health and well-being.

### The Role of the Employer

"The situation at work is an essential factor for the health and well-being of employees", explains Michel Rey, Managing Director of Kelly Services in Switzerland. Employers can contribute to the health of their employees in many ways, by promoting healthy habits such as exercise and good nutrition, and creating a supportive working

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### Did you know...

#### ...that March 22nd is World Water Day?

A date designated by the United Nations to bring awareness to the world's water crisis and the UN's goal of reducing by half the percentage of people in the world who lack access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.



**Fact!** More water is used in the bathroom than any other place in the home.

#### What can you do?

Don't waste water; fix leaks promptly; turn off the water when you brush your teeth and shave; install low-flow toilets, shower heads and faucet aerators and you'll save thousands of gallons/liters of water a year. It's a savings that will not only reduce your water bill, but will also help save our water resources for the future.



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### FROM THE EXPERT

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Since the earliest days of medicine, wine has been recognized for its healthful and nutritive properties. Many of the pathogens that threaten humans are inhibited or killed off by the acids and alcohols in wine. Because of this, wine was considered to be a safer drink than much of the available water up until the 18th century.

The quality of most drinking water has improved a lot since then, but wine drinking remains as popular as ever. The good news is that more than 400 clinical and laboratory studies conducted worldwide have confirmed what Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, claimed in the first century BC: wine has a beneficial effect on health, particularly red wine.



## Red wine, good for your health

Why not white wine, beer or other alcohols? The process of fermenting grapes into wine produces a chemical reaction in the composition of the grape juice that introduces several hundred different and distinct molecules, some of which are known to have beneficial properties.

*Catechins* and *flavonoids*, for example, function as anti-oxidants, preventing "free-radicals" from doing cellular damage in the body. *Resveratrol* and *quercetin* have been shown to boost the immune system, block cancer formation, and protect against heart disease.

The higher levels of healthy molecules to be found in red wine come from the skin and seeds of the red grape, which are included during the fermentation process, and also responsible for giving red wine its colour. The grape juice used for making white wines has much less time in contact with the grape skins, which are not used in the fermentation process, and hence the level of beneficial molecules is lower.

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## Study reveals Workers Want Employers to Care

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environment, such as allowing flexible working hours, improving communication, recognizing efforts and achievements, and decreasing stress.

According to the Kelly Services study, 25% of employees were absent due to illness during the year, one-third of those for 3 days or more. Stress was cited as the number one cause of illness and work-place absence. Over-work, psychological pressure to achieve, excessive expectations and lack of recognition

were all cited as factors that can contribute to stress.

Stress may manifest itself in many ways, including difficulty sleeping, physical and mental exhaustion, and migraines. When the body is thus worn down it has a greater tendency to be susceptible to colds and viruses that a healthy body can normally resist. As a result, employee absenteeism increases. "With employees in good health," explains Michel Rey, "absenteeism can be greatly reduced".

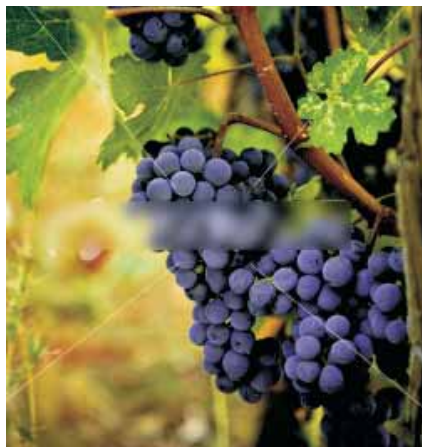
## Red wine, good for your health

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The list of health benefits attributed to red wine includes lowering the risk of many ailments, including diabetes, ulcers, coronary disease and stroke. It has shown positive effects on the prevention of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and other forms of dementia. Wine is a mild natural tranquilizer, reducing anxiety and tension. As part of a normal diet, wine provides the body with substances that aid digestion, and small amounts of vitamins and minerals.

Despite all this good news about wine, however, over-indulgence can negate all the beneficial effects. How much is enough? Experts recommend no more than 250 ml per day. The key to healthy wine drinking is regularity and moderation. Numerous studies have pointed to the fact that abstainers or binge drinkers are at greater risk for many illnesses than moderate drinkers who consume no more than 1 to 2 glasses of wine per day. In studies conducted in England and Denmark, for example, researchers found the occurrence of coronary disease to be much higher in heavy drinkers and,

more surprisingly, even higher in abstainers, than in those that consumed moderate amounts of wine.



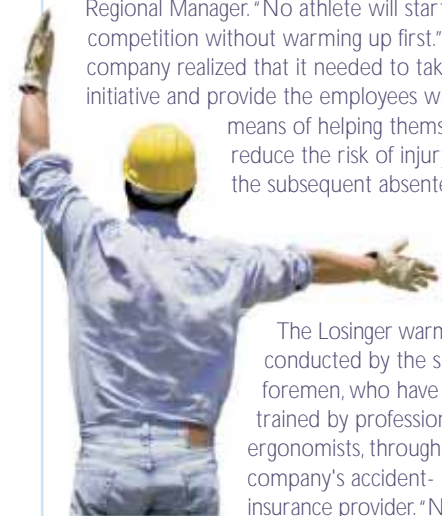
While wine is certainly not a cure-all, and not everyone should drink wine, the vast majority of healthy people may enjoy wine regularly and moderately as a pleasure that supports and prolongs a gracious life.

*Source: Professeur Serge Renaud  
Ref 1/ Arch Intern Med. 2006 Dec 11-25;166(22):2437-45*

## Well-being in Action

In 2008 Swiss construction giant Losinger, part of the international Bouygues group, launched a pilot project of daily pre-work exercise for workers at 4 of the company's construction sites.

The company came to the realization that most work-related accidents occurred in the morning, and such accidents were primarily due to incorrect body movements, causing musculoskeletal injuries. "A worker is like an athlete," explains François Vaultier, Losinger Regional Manager. "No athlete will start a competition without warming up first." The company realized that it needed to take the initiative and provide the employees with a



means of helping themselves reduce the risk of injury and the subsequent absenteeism.

The Losinger warm-up is conducted by the site foremen, who have been trained by professional ergonomists, through the company's accident-insurance provider. "No one is obliged to participate," explains Vaultier, "but those that were hesitant in the beginning have quickly joined the group."

In addition to the physical effects of the warm-up, which lasts about 10 minutes, there are additional benefits. Workers have become more conscious of their movements throughout the day, taking greater care and fewer risks. There is also the camaraderie: "We didn't expect it to be so much fun," says one of the employees. "It's helped to build a sense of team spirit."

The project has proven effective: no work-related accidents were reported at the company's sites in 2008. Based on this success, Losinger has decided to expand the morning warm-up to all its work sites in 2009.



### Well-being at Work

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Eden water - your source of well-being at work



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