



Kellogg's

AWAY FROM HOME

AHEAD OF THE CRAVE

SNACKING IN HEALTHCARE: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WELLBEING

How to give employees foods and experiences that support their wellbeing and increase engagement.



The doubles and extended work shifts that are common due to their impact on work-life balance – have been shown to dramatically increase burnout: Nurses who work 10 hour shifts or longer are up to two and a half times more likely to experience burnout and job dissatisfaction, and these in turn are linked to lower patient satisfaction levels.¹ Four in 10 nurses (41%) report feeling stretched too thin,² and nurses who are burned out are less able to care for themselves and their patients.³

These challenges were only exacerbated by COVID-19 as hospitals and other care facilities increasingly adopted longer shifts as a strategy to enhance staffing levels to cope with increasing demands on health services.⁴ Nurses and healthcare workers were soon overworked and overloaded.

Against this backdrop, the wellbeing of nurses and hospital staff has become a priority of no small importance. Even before the pandemic, healthcare operators had become increasingly concerned with motivating staff to eat healthier,⁵ and it has only become more critical. Healthy practices such as eating nutritious meals and

snacks are important to preventing or reducing burnout:⁶ “Snacks can be a nurse’s best friend during long 12-hour hospital shifts,” registered nurse Kathleen Colduvell wrote in Nurse.org., but operators remain concerned about their ability to offer products that meet their hospital system’s nutritional requirements, such as snacks that include whole grains or have lower sodium,⁷ while satisfying employees.

The opportunity for operators, then, is to care for employees and give them foods and experiences to support their wellbeing and increase engagement. Here’s how to get started.

Focus on total wellbeing, not just the nutritional content of the snacks and meals offered.

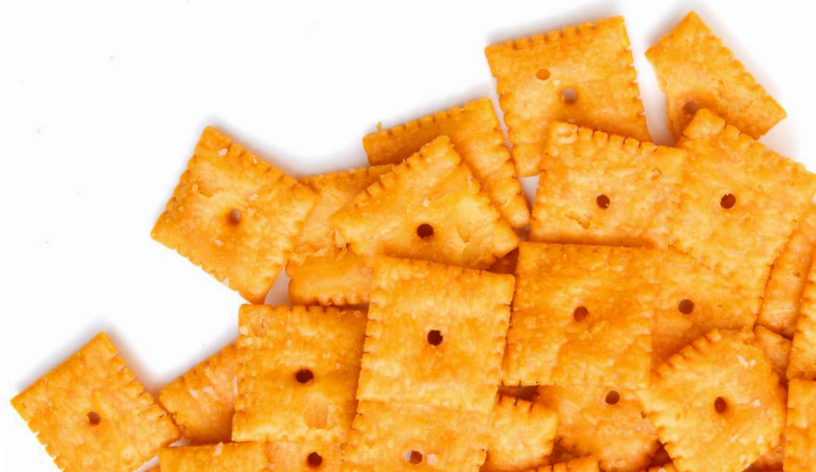
It's not about pushing salads. Healthcare operators charged with providing nourishment and services need to be offering foods and experiences that capture three key areas of wellbeing: emotional, physical and social.

- **Emotional wellbeing:** From an emotional perspective, food brings people together, and this togetherness fosters community and connections that enrich our lives. Focus on food experiences and positive social interactions that delight the senses and forge connections. It can be as simple as adding fun facts or hometowns to staff name tags or placing conversational prompts at dining tables or in break areas. For the food choices themselves, ensure that you're offering a variety of flavors, textures and shapes.
- **Physical wellbeing:** Enable positive eating patterns with a focus on fiber and plant-based foods that improve wellbeing. A plant-based diet is known to promote physiological wellbeing by providing the right balance of macro- and micro-nutrients that feed and create a diverse microbiome, which supports immune health, mood and sleep quality. Ingredients like sugar, sodium or artificial colors and flavors can play a role in a balanced diet for emotional comfort and support; include them in moderation.
- **Social wellbeing:** Source foods locally when possible, and educate employees about the steps you are taking to support the local food system and provide a variety of foods to support biodiversity. This can also support the emotional needs of healthcare staff by enabling them to make connections centered on social responsibility.

Increase engagement, both by tailoring how you offer snacks and how you communicate your offering.

Think creatively about how you provide snacks and meals. An increasing number of operators are thinking and acting like full-service restaurants that deliver variety and value while meeting consumer demands. Other operators are focusing on novel formats, from customizable and made-to-order options to coffee bars, bistros and micro-markets. These out-of-the-box formats also serve to bring people together, fostering community and emotional wellbeing.

As you do, consider how engagement differs by generation. Different claims appeal to different generational groups; targeting how you talk about nutrition and wellbeing can help you more effectively engage nurses and staff. Millennials, for example, respond powerfully to a commitment by foodservice operators to employee wellbeing, so consider creating a space for coffee chats throughout the day to promote emotional wellbeing or sourcing more local ingredients to promote social wellbeing. Millennials are also more comfortable with dining out as well as with take-out and other food-to-go options,⁸ and both creative menus and healthy fare can be a draw.⁹ Members of Gen Z, on the other hand, respond positively to global flavors and messages of LGBTQ solidarity, so consider creating themes or events that bring people together to celebrate a culture or community.¹⁰ Boomers, for their part, are most likely to choose classic dishes, like sandwiches; ensure that these options promote physiological wellbeing and a balanced diet while feeding into their sense of tradition.¹¹



Ensuring the wellbeing of healthcare professionals requires taking a holistic approach to providing the right products and the right level of engagement. It ultimately goes far beyond snacking – with the long shifts and off hours healthcare professionals work, operators should focus on everything from quick options for nourishment to breakfast and dinner on the go while ensuring that the messaging they use resonates with their staffing community. In doing so, they can support emotional, physical and social wellbeing while engaging the nurses and medical professionals who play such a critical role in keeping the rest of the population healthy.



1. Stimpfel, Amy Witkoski, et al. "The Longer the Shifts for Hospital Nurses, the Higher the Levels of Burnout and Patient Dissatisfaction." *Health Affairs (Project Hope)*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Nov. 2012.
2. "Nurse Burnout: Top Factors and How to Combat It." *Incredible Health*, 23 Feb. 2021.
3. "Trends and Implications with Nursing Engagement." PRC.
4. Dall'Ora, Chiara, and Anna Dahlgren. "Shift Work in Nursing: Closing the Knowledge Gaps and Advancing Innovation in Practice." *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, Elsevier Ltd., Dec. 2020.
5. 2018 Healthcare report, Technomic.
6. "Nurse Burnout: Top Factors and How to Combat It." *Incredible Health*, 23 Feb. 2021.
7. 2018 Healthcare report.
8. Ithaca study.
9. 2018 Healthcare report.
10. Ithaca.
11. 2018 Healthcare report.