

- ◆ **The Trouble with Sodium**
- ◆ **Ask Dr. Pinette**

Should Employers be Concerned About Gambling in the Workplace?

Martin, a well-respected and likable supervisor at a wood pellet production plant, has three sons. His wife is about to deliver twins and they have chosen to wait until the birth to learn the babies' gender. Some of Martin's co-workers want to do something nice for him and have started a gender pool. Anyone willing to part with \$5 can guess the gender of each baby and have a chance to win half of what is raised. This will give Martin and his wife some extra money for all of the diapers they will need to buy and one lucky winner will pocket a few additional dollars.

It all seems so innocent, but if one of the workers is living with a gambling problem, this seemingly nice gesture could be problematic. Gambling problems are not limited to casino floors, poker rooms, race tracks or lottery sales. Unlike people who may show outward signs of substance abuse, a person suffering from problem gambling looks just like a person who has never gambled. The addiction is real and the results can be devastating.



Gambling is defined as wagering anything of value on an event with an uncertain outcome. The item of value may not necessarily be money. It can be possessions, services, and even time. Gambling becomes a problem when someone continues to gamble in spite of and with disregard to the negative consequences of their gambling habits.

While only 2 to 3 percent of Americans have a gambling problem, the most severe problems can lead to increased debt, the loss of a home, the end of a marriage and sometimes, illegal activity like theft or embezzlement.

Problem gambling can affect the workplace on a smaller scale as well, with lost productivity and damaged employee relationships that lead to low morale. Employers like Martin's can limit the potential harm to their business by addressing raffles, pools, and other seemingly harmless gambling activities in workplace policy.

Martin is fortunate to have a group of fellow co-workers that care about him and want to help. His employer might suggest alternatives to gambling like dinners, bake sales or simply taking up a collection. The employer can also strengthen the workforce's awareness of problem gambling by providing access to self-screening tools, adding problem gambling messages in wellness communications and by encouraging people with gambling problems to seek services from the Employee Assistance Program.

March is problem gambling awareness month, to learn more or to access resources about problem gambling visit the Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/help/gambling/index.htm>. **Prevention works.**

Employer Success Story

The Brick Store Museum in Kennebunk, with funding from Healthy Maine Streets, has purchased a bike rack that will make its debut in spring of 2015 on the sidewalk on Main Street. Funds were also used to purchase a HEPA vacuum, which has been used to clean the chemicals on the taxidermy birds that are on display in the naturalist exhibit. This makes it much safer for staff to handle and for visitors to view the exhibits.

In the summer of 2015, the Museum is looking forward to re-opening its Victory Garden for the second year. This year the garden will also include a spot for downtown employees looking to get outside for their lunch hour.

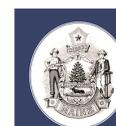
The Brick Store Museum is also excited to announce that the Museum earned a grant from the Maine Public Health Association for one Automated External Defibrillator (AED), which will be installed at the Museum in 2015. Kennebunk EMS will be providing training for museum staff.

March Health Observances

- ◆ [National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Nutrition Month](#)
- ◆ [Workplace Eye Wellness Month](#)

April Health Observances

- ◆ [Alcohol Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#)



Maine Center for Disease
Control and Prevention
An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

The Trouble with Sodium

Most of the sodium we eat comes in the form of salt. The picture below shows where and what percent of salt comes from in a typical diet:



Why Should We Watch How Much Sodium We Consume?

If you eat too much sodium, it can increase your blood pressure and put you at risk for high blood pressure. Blood pressure is the force of blood on the walls of your blood vessels as blood flows through them. About one in three Mainers are diagnosed with high blood pressure, which increases their risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

What Can Employers Do?

A person should eat 1,500-2,300 milligrams (mgs) or less of sodium a day. Below are some tips employers can do to help cut back on sodium:

- Develop guidelines for food served at meetings and company events that address sodium
- Identify healthy vending options that include low or no sodium products
- Post nutrition information on or near the vending machines that include sodium.

Tips on Reducing Sodium

- Fill up on fruits and vegetables- they taste great and are low in sodium
- Use spices, herbs, or lemon to flavor your food instead of salt
- Look for “unsalted,” “low-sodium,” or “no salt added” options for deli meats, cheeses, soups and snacks
- Limit premade sauces and condiments
- Check food labels and choose foods with less than 400 milligram of sodium per serving.

For more information visit: www.mainehearthealth.org

Do you want to highlight your worksite in a future newsletter or have questions that you want Maine CDC staff to answer? Please send your worksite success story or questions to Meredith Backus at meredith.backus@maine.gov

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Ask Dr. Pinette

Question: I’ve been hearing a lot about the Healthy Us Scorecard. What is it?

Answer: The Healthy Us Scorecard is an easy-to-use, online tool designed to promote healthy living. This tool is replacing our former online tool.

The scorecard allows you to:

- Asses how well your worksite supports healthy living
- Create a work plan by providing you with strategies to make your workplace the healthiest it can be
- Provides resources proven to improve the health of your employees

Plus, it’s FREE for all Maine employers.

To learn more or to sign up, visit: healthyusscorecard.org

Additional Resources




Department of Health and Human Services
 Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

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