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**AUGUST 2017** Health & Wellbeing Newsletter



## Sickness absence accounts for over 137 million lost working days per year

**According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2016, sickness absence accounted for 137.3 million lost working days. This equates to 4.3 days per worker.**

It's thought that employers pay £9 billion a year in sick pay and other associated costs and research suggests that if current trends around lifestyle choices in particular continue as they currently are, the health of the general population over the coming years will deteriorate, with a knock-on effect on levels of sickness in the workplace.

The Health and Safety Executive indicates that most sickness absence is not caused by the workplace itself, with only one-fifth of all of working days lost being work related. Lower-paid, lower-skilled workers are more likely to take absences through ill health, and better employee engagement is associated with lower levels of absence. This is an important point to note if you are an organisation that is trying to figure out what workplace

initiatives might assist in reducing levels of absence. The ONS report highlights that longer-term absences (4 weeks or more) tend to be related to musculoskeletal disorders, mental health disorders, or medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

The consistent factor amongst companies with high employee engagement and lower sickness absence, is the willingness of senior management to acknowledge the problem by being proactive in improving workplace culture and helping to change employee habits. By focusing on preventive measures or early interventions, they are better at assisting and supporting their employees. This is certainly something that we see here at Healthy Performance.

To read the full ONS report head to <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2016>



## Can you spot the first signs of a heart attack?

A heart attack occurs when the supply of blood to a part of the heart becomes blocked, leading to damage to the muscle tissue. This can be life-threatening and is mainly caused by coronary heart disease narrowing the arteries as a result of a build-up of fatty material on the artery walls.

Can you spot the signs and symptoms of a heart attack? If not, here they are:

- ▶ **Chest pain: tightness, pressure, pain or a burning feeling in your chest**
- ▶ **Pain radiating down your arm, and even into your neck, jaw and back or stomach**
- ▶ **Feeling weak or lightheaded**
- ▶ **Feeling nauseous or vomiting**
- ▶ **Shortness of breath**

It's the combination of symptoms that's important in determining whether a person is having a heart attack, and not just the severity of chest pain, as this can sometimes be mistaken for indigestion. But don't delay in getting help if you think you or someone you know is having a heart attack. Always call 999.

For more information, head to <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Heart-attack/Pages/Symptoms.aspx> or find a course that you can attend. You could help to save a life.

## Tip of the Month

If you are over 40, you should have a heart health check to assess your risk of having a heart attack.

## Fact of the Month

The average heart can pump around 5 litres of blood per minute.

## Food of the Month

Crisp, fresh broccoli florets dipped in hummus are a terrific heart-healthy snack with a whopping list of nutrients, including vitamins C and E, potassium, folate, calcium and fibre.

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Create healthy habits, not restrictions.

Anon

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