



Using Novelty Items to Spark Interest

Novelty items are small awards given to program participants to entice and

encourage further interest and involvement in the program. They are usually given as “freebies” during events and activities. Novelty items are small, but significant ways to spark and sustain interest. Keeping the prizes consistent with the healthy message of the contest is essential. Be sure to mention the prizes at the outset of the program.

Determine if you are able to provide incentives or novelty items for employee participants. Check with your fiscal agent for the guidelines that apply to your worksite. Set aside funds in your budget for incentive purchases, or consider assessing a participation fee to cover these costs.

Order incentives well ahead of time to be sure that you have them when needed.

Examples of Incentives

To get you started, here are some ideas from the very inexpensive to the almost grand.

- Consider supporting local businesses
Arrange with the local grocer or farmer’s market to provide cents-off coupons for the purchase of produce
- As a weekly prize, arrange for a certificate toward the
 - ▶ purchase of produce from the local grocer or farmer’s market

■ From your favorite discount store:

- vegetable peelers
- apple corer/wedger
- vegetable brush
- bag clips
- vegetable steamer
- instant-read food thermometer (to emphasize the food safety aspect)
- food strainer for canned foods or colander for rinsing fresh produce
- carry-along food containers to bring food to work
- stickers (especially appropriate for the “kid friendly” portion for workers to take home to families)
- story books about apples or other foods (especially appropriate for the “kid friendly” portion for workers to take home to families)
- dried fruit samples



- Health conscious cookbooks or magazines from your favorite bookstore or magazine stand such as:

- *Cooking Light* or *Eating Well*
- Better Homes and Gardens special interest publications such as *Low Calorie Low Fat Recipes*
- *The American Heart Association Cookbook*

- Promotional materials from the Produce for Better Health Foundation. A catalog may be viewed online at www.pbhcatalog.com/. Suggestions include

- T-shirts
- water bottles
- pens, pencils, erasers
- key chains
- stickers, buttons
- caps
- aprons
- lunch bags (either thermal or paper)
- cups or mugs

Information was adapted from the National Cancer Institute's Research-tested Intervention Programs and the Tompkins County, New York Department of Health.

When to Provide Incentives

- The beginning of the challenge, as an incentive for signing up for the program.
- At the Kick-off session.
- Each week during a planned activity
- As a prize for a weekly drawing from all participants' names.
- Each week to recognize staffers who were seen snacking on fruits and vegetables or viewed eating fruits and vegetables at lunch.
- The end of the program—hold a drawing for all participants who completed the four-week PERS Fruit and Veggie Challenge.
- As a Grand Prize drawing item at the end of the PERS Fruit and Veggie Challenge.

