

# Overcoming Employee Health Inertia — Building a Healthier and More Productive Workforce

While the majority of UAE employees are aware they need to do more to improve their health, Aetna International research finds that fear and worry are causing a huge number to avoid the situation. Below are the eight key attitudes and barriers to self-care and well-being, as well as tips to help employers inspire action to create a culture of well-being and healthy, productive workforces.

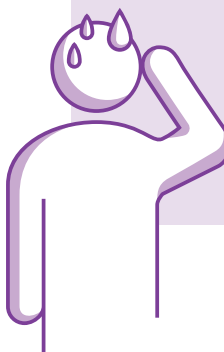
## 1 Concern about personal long-term health does not correlate with action



of UAE employees think about their health at least some of the time and **45% admit to feeling worried about their long-term health** but haven't had a health check in the last year.

**Tip:** Employers should create a culture that supports psychological change so that behavioural change can occur. It's important to layer up understanding of employees' contexts, like their beliefs or socio-economic issues.

## 2 Fear of the unknown prevents people from taking action



**27% of the employees are worried about their health** but are too scared to have a health check.

**Tip:** By developing a better understanding of the fears and beliefs within the workforce through one-to-one discussions or in-depth questionnaires, employers can determine how best to motivate their employees.

## 3 Lack of time prevents people accessing advice and care

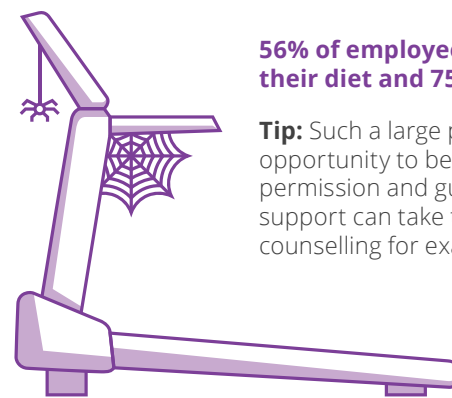


**32% of employees say they don't have time to be ill** at work and 25% say they can't get time off for a health check.

**Tip:** A mixture of on-site and virtual care really works. Consider setting up on-site clinics where employees can pop in for a consultation and get blood/lab work done. Results can be sent to employees digitally and they can discuss those results with a doctor by phone.

25%

## 4 Diet and fitness levels are top health concerns



**56% of employees say they could do more to improve their diet** and **75% say they need to exercise more.**

**Tip:** Such a large percentage suggests that employers have an opportunity to better signpost individuals to the support, permission and guidance they need to make it happen. This support can take the form of genetics analysis and behavioural counselling for example.

## 5 Management could play a bigger role in motivating people



In evaluating the stimuli or triggers that would motivate people to go to the doctor or take more interest in their health, **instruction from the manager rates the highest (28%)**

**Tip:** Businesses should address more than just people's workload, but life's complexities, so that the job isn't just financially rewarding but somewhere that gives employees a sense of purpose and helps them achieve a quality of life. Corporate social responsibility and social initiatives help employees feel better about their workplace.

## 6 People are unaware of their own personal health status



**Only 35% of UAE employees know their cholesterol level** and just 31% their body fat percentage.

**Tip:** Encouraging employees to have a health check, knowing that the results are going to be truly confidential and that support will be on hand to interpret those results and chart a course towards better health and wellness, is often the first step in setting people on the path to better health.

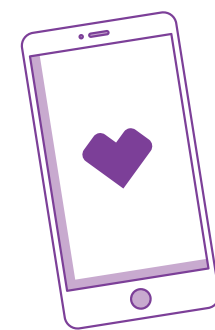
## 7 'Dr. Google' could be preventing appropriate action and treatment



**39% of people say they look up symptoms online and self-medicate** rather and 44% say that looking up symptoms online makes them more nervous about going to the doctor.

**Tip:** Rather than having employees seek advice via online sources, encourage them to use reliable digital tech, such as vHealth, which allows them to consult there and then, so they get a much quicker, more immediate, personalised response and get triaged to the right level.

## 8 Access to health care technology would encourage more people to seek out care and guidance



Better access to online health consultations would encourage 34% of employees to get regular check-ups. **35% would be more likely to get checked if they had access to a health care app or online medical service.**

**Tip:** The phy-digital access model (a blend of physical and digital access to health care) offers employees flexibility – making health care part of the workflow, the environment and the community. The workplace is based around habits, structure and routine, so employers could embed health care into that environment.

### About this research

Business of Health 2020: How organisations can overcome employee health inertia is an independent consumer research study into the views of HR Directors and office workers, commissioned by Aetna International. These stats include the responses of 1,001 office employees working in mid-large businesses (minimum 500 employees) and 251 HR Directors working at mid-large business (minimum 250 employees) in the UAE. Read full report here.