Question & Answer

What lifestyle choices have the biggest effects on dehydration?

BUBBA WOLFORD received his MS in Exercise Physiology from Mississippi State University 1991. He joined Sqwincher in 2009, serving now as Director of Corporate Development and Training, where he spearheads promoting the importance of proper hydration within the Industrial Workplace to key corporate accounts

Hydration is about more than drinking fluids. Individual differences in lifestyle can increase or decrease the likelihood of dehydration. If you want to promote lifestyle changes that will help your workers get the most out of their hydration, consider educating them on the effects of diet and alcohol consumption.

You've got no say over what your employees eat, of course. But that doesn't mean you can't give them pointers about proper nutrition, especially when it could have an effect on their safety on the job. Low carb diets are still fairly popular, and some of your workers might have adopted one as part of their New Year's resolutions. The problem is that a diet low in carbohydrates can deprive your body of water-heavy foods like whole grains. Let your workers know that if they take in a reduced amount of carbs, they might have to make up for it with higher fluid intake throughout the day.

What employees consume during the workday can also have an impact on their hydration. The kind of stuff you'll find in vending machine – sodas, energy drinks, salty snacks – are especially likely to prevent the body from getting and retaining the fluids it needs. Snacking on fruits and vegetables, on the other hand, will help them stay hydrated.

Alcohol consumption is another one worth mentioning. Most people assume that since they don't drink on the job, there's no way their alcohol intake will affect their safety at work. But someone who regularly consumes alcohol will have a harder time staying hydrated.

While you can't control their lifestyle choices, educating employees on the effects of diet and alcohol intake is a good way to help them make safer decisions.