

How Organisations Can Support Mobile Workforces with Diabetes - From Prevention to Management

With World Diabetes Day approaching on 14 November, organisations are urged to support diabetes prevention and management strategies.

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, November 15, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As global mobility surges, managing chronic conditions like diabetes during travel has become a significant concern. Diabetes remains one of the fastest-growing global public health issues, affecting approximately 422 million people worldwide and causing 1.5 million deaths annually.

International SOS, the world's leading health and security services company, has reported a significant year-on-year increase in diabetes-related assistance cases over the past three years, with a 28% increase in 2022 and a 32% increase in 2023. Meanwhile, year-to-date 2024 data indicates a further uptick. With World Diabetes Day approaching on 14 November, organisations are urged to support diabetes prevention and management strategies. This year's theme, 'Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps' highlights the need for equitable, comprehensive and affordable diabetes care.

Dr Athenais Sivaloganathan (Medical Advisor, Consulting, SEA) at International SOS, emphasises the importance of comprehensive health strategies: "It is important for organisations to understand the unique challenges that employees with diabetes face, particularly when travelling. By recognising these specific needs, companies can provide the necessary support and resources to help their employees manage their condition effectively. This ensures that employees can maintain their health and productivity, even when they are on the go. With thoughtful planning and the right resources, organisations can help their employees navigate the complexities of diabetes, fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment.



INTERNATIONAL SOS

TOP TIPS TO SUPPORT MOBILE WORKFORCES WITH DIABETES

FROM PREVENTION TO MANAGEMENT

- Education and Awareness**
Increase awareness about diabetes symptoms to encourage early diagnosis and effective management, thereby preventing severe health complications.
- Comprehensive Health Solutions**
Offer resources such as dietary guidelines, exercise programmes and regular health screenings to help employees manage their diabetes.
- Supportive Culture & Policies**
Develop and implement policies allowing for flexible work schedules and access to medical care while travelling. Ensure employees have time to rest and recover from travel.
- Healthy Lifestyle**
Offer guidance on maintaining a healthy diet and regular exercise. Provide resources such as a list of healthy meal options and tips for finding nutritious food in different locations.
- Health Monitoring & Adjustments**
Ensure employees have scheduled breaks to take medication, check blood sugar levels and eat regular meals. Provide a private space for insulin administration and other medical needs.

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Dr Athenais Sivaloganathan

People with diabetes face a double burden: a higher risk of life-threatening conditions like heart attack, stroke, and kidney failure, compounded by the psychological toll of diabetes distress. Individuals with diabetes are two to three times more likely to experience depression compared to those without the condition. These challenges can significantly impact employee wellbeing, leading to increased absenteeism, reduced productivity and higher healthcare costs for employers.

According to The International Diabetes Federation (IDF),

the global healthcare costs for individuals living with diabetes are expected to exceed \$1054 billion by 2045. Furthermore, the prevalence of diabetes is projected to rise, with 643 million people affected by 2030, and 783 million by 2045. With this rising prevalence, it is crucial for organisations to implement strategies that help their workforce manage and prevent this chronic condition. Minor adjustments can reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, concentration and energy levels and reduce the chance of on-the-job injury.

Dr Athenais Sivaloganathan continues, “Early diagnosis is crucial. Raising awareness about diabetes symptoms can prompt people to get screened, enabling early detection and intervention to prevent or delay its onset. This proactive approach can prevent undiagnosed diabetes from causing severe health complications, affecting various organ systems, including eye damage, heart and kidney disease, nerve damage and poor wound healing. By prioritising employee health, organisations can enhance productivity and foster a more engaged and resilient workforce. This approach also promotes a positive work environment and supports overall employee wellbeing.”

International SOS offers five tips for organisations to support employees in managing and preventing diabetes:

1. **Education and Awareness:** Increase awareness about diabetes symptoms to encourage early diagnosis and effective management, thereby preventing severe health complications.
2. **Provide Comprehensive Health Solutions:** Offer resources such as dietary guidelines, exercise programmes and regular health screenings to help employees manage their diabetes.
3. **Supportive Culture and Policies:** Develop and implement policies allowing for flexible work schedules and access to medical care while travelling. Foster a culture that prioritises health and wellbeing by accommodating regular meals and exercise, and ensuring employees have time to rest and recover from travel.
4. **Promote a Healthy Lifestyle:** Offer guidance on maintaining a healthy diet and regular exercise. Provide resources such as a list of healthy meal options and tips for finding nutritious food in different locations.
5. **Facilitate Health Monitoring and Provide Adjustments:** Ensure employees have scheduled breaks to take medication, check blood sugar levels and eat regular meals. Provide a private

space for insulin administration and other medical needs.

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