

WELLNESS CASE STUDY:

St. John's Corporate Health & Wellness

Impact of Well Coaching at a Rural Manufacturing Company

Helping people make behavioral changes is the overall goal of well coaching. Since 2006, St. John's Corporate Health & Wellness has provided onsite health screenings for the employees of Jasper Engines, a rural manufacturing company. Outcomes of the health screenings showed a group of employees at risk for cardiovascular disease (due to high cholesterols, high blood pressure, high blood glucose, tobacco use or obesity). The company chose to provide these employees with onsite and telephonic weekly well coaching sessions.



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A Wellness Vision can help Reduce Risk Factors

Each week, the employee would communicate with their well coach to set goals to improve their health by making lifestyle changes: getting active, exercising, giving up tobacco, stress management and adding more nutritious food choices to their diet.

Before well coaching started, employees at the factory received onsite education in the form of luncheon presentations. One such presentation covered an explanation of cardiovascular disease utilizing animated slides illustrating how plaque builds up in arteries leading to heart attacks and stroke. Educational information was presented on risk factors as well as ways to decrease or manage them.

The next step was an onsite Health Risk Assessment (HRA) which identified individual cardiovascular risks for each employee.

One employee, who we'll refer to as John Doe, worked with a St. John's wellness coach for a period of 12 weeks after his HRA. John is a male factory worker (age range: 45+) with a high school education. He has lived in a rural setting all of his life. No major illness or diseases have been experienced to date. He works hard and feels he eats well. He expresses satisfaction with his life and did not participate in any kind of exercise program.

John's HRA revealed elevated cholesterol levels. Specifically, his total cholesterol, LDL level and triglyceride level were elevated and his HDL cholesterol was very

low. His Body Mass Index (BMI) was elevated as well as his blood pressure. Due to the number of risk factors, John was placed in a "high risk" group along with 10 other employees. Each received 12 weekly visits with a well coach, a nurse trained to guide individuals in setting goals and making healthier lifestyle choices to improve the quality and longevity of their lives. Our staff are also specifically trained in motivational interviewing and focus their guidance on the client's readiness to change.

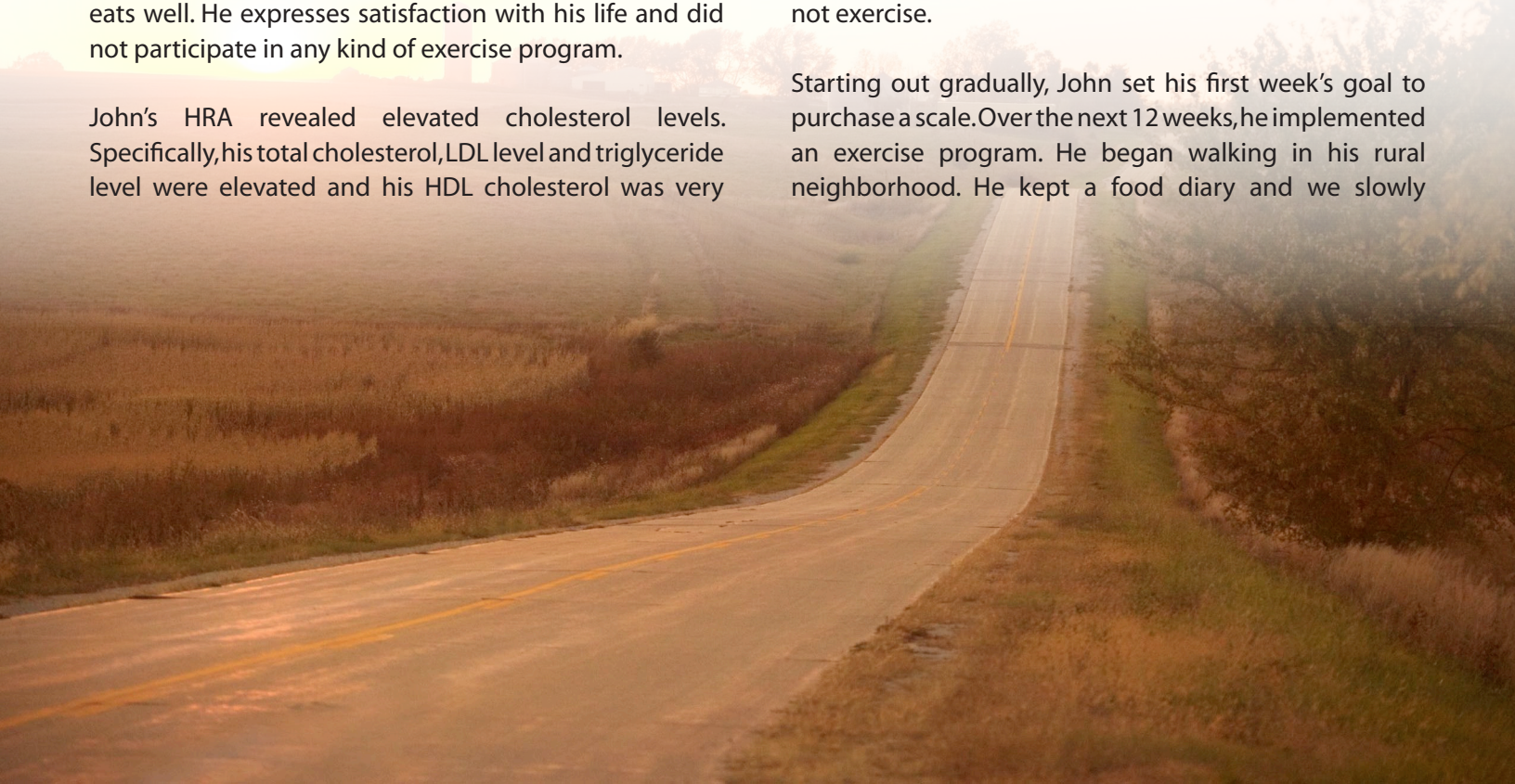
Initially, John developed a wellness vision that included reducing his risk factors. His goals were:

- (1) lower blood pressure below 120/80
- (2) decrease his cholesterol below 200
- (3) increase HDL to above 50
- (4) ultimately, lose 15 to 20 pounds, exercising 30 to 45 minutes 5 times a week

Although these were lofty goals, John set them for himself and was determined to achieve them in the 12-week span of well coaching.

John had not weighed himself since high school. He didn't own a scale. He admitted that he did not read food labels, nor did he understand them. He also did not exercise.

Starting out gradually, John set his first week's goal to purchase a scale. Over the next 12 weeks, he implemented an exercise program. He began walking in his rural neighborhood. He kept a food diary and we slowly



From Cinnamon Rolls to Oatmeal

identified areas of excess fat, salt and calories in his diet. This helped John see where he could make wiser food choices and encouraged him to read the labeling on food containers.

Numerous educational materials were shared with John as he began to understand the basic nutritional information he needed to make better food choices. John was eager to learn and readily absorbed information provided to him.

By the end of the 12-week well coaching session, John had reached his goals. He successfully exercised five times a week, walking for 45 minutes. He ate oatmeal for breakfast, replacing the big cinnamon roll he had eaten before, demonstrating that he had learned to make healthier choices.

John succeeded in lowering his cholesterol from 213 to 191. His triglycerides dropped from 166 to 88 and his blood pressure also came down from 132/90 to

124/68. He continues to check it at work where a blood pressure monitor is provided by his employer.

In addition to these healthy lifestyle improvements, John lost 25 pounds during the 12 weeks he was well coached. His BMI went from 34.22 to 30.99. He plans to continue his new lifestyle and monitor his blood pressure daily.

Clearly, John experienced positive health outcomes as a result of well coaching, but what about the other eleven employees identified as part of the "high risk" group due to four or more risk factors? After receiving well coaching, these individuals demonstrated a significant drop in cardiovascular risk factors (see graph). Well coaching continues to help employees at this manufacturing facility make behavioral changes that are improving their lives. Well coaching has also helped the company improve its bottom line by reducing insurance premiums.

