

## **Effectiveness of Employee Internet-Based Weight Management Program**

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**OBJECTIVE:** To evaluate an employee Internet-based weight management program. **METHODS:** Changes in eating habits, stage of change, body weight, and weight categories were compared between enrollment and 6 months after enrollment. Weights and weight categories were compared among a subset of participants and non-participants at 12 months. **RESULTS:** Seven thousand seven hundred forty-three International Business Machines employees enrolled in the program between December 2004 and February 2006, and 74% were overweight or obese (body mass index  $\geq 25$ ). At 6 months, follow-up survey respondents (1639) had significantly increased most healthy eating habits (eg, 20% decrease in junk foods) and the frequency of healthy foods eaten (eg, 12% increase in fruits). The percentage of participants in the normal weight category had increased from 27.0% to 29.8%, while average weight decreased from 182.6 to 180.2 lbs ( $P < 0.05$ ). Increased web site usage was associated with increased weight loss and stage of change improvements. At 12 months, a higher percentage of participants had moved into the normal weight category compared with the percentage of non-participants (+2.0% points;  $P < 0.05$ ), although there were no differences in average weight change. **CONCLUSIONS:** Despite issues of limited penetration and potential self-selection, this Internet-based program had utility in reaching a large number of employees in dispersed work settings, and it led to improved eating habits and improved stage of change at 6 months and more individuals moving into the normal weight category at 6 and 12 months.