

Reduce health risks with corporate health-management programs

Interventions combat Americans' declining health profile, research study shows

Health risks can have a substantial impact on employee productivity, employer health care costs and employee quality of life. Left unaddressed, the burden of these health risks continues to grow and can even weaken our workplace cultures. Fortunately, however, many health risks and conditions can be supported through employer-sponsored health-management interventions.

To evaluate the impact wellness programs can have on health risk reduction, Optum completed a research study focused on three wellness interventions:



Online health coaching



Telephonic wellness coaching



Biometric screenings

Optum researchers compared the reduction in health risks between individuals who completed at least one program with those who did not enroll in any of the three programs.

Methodology

A cohort of 199,190 individuals from 2,145 employers was analyzed. Individuals were included if they completed two consecutive health assessments approximately one year apart.

The nine risks that were included for evaluation were: alcohol use, blood pressure, body weight, cholesterol, medication or drug use for relaxation, nutrition, physical activity, stress and tobacco use.

These nearly 200,000 individuals were divided into three groups based on their level of engagement during the study period.

Intervention groups

Intervention group A = 50,474

- Participated in and completed one of the three interventions


Intervention group B = 11,499


- Participated in and completed two of the three interventions


Intervention group C = 148,716

- Individuals had not participated in any of the three interventions at any time up until the date of their second health assessment

Summary of key results

 **High-risk individuals** who completed a single Optum™ health-management program achieved a significant reduction in risk.

 **Synchronized health-management programs** maximize health risk reduction

 Completing more than one **Optum health-management program** led to an incremental reduction in some health risks.

Single intervention results

Overall, high-risk individuals who completed an Optum health-management program achieved a significant reduction in risk.

Online health coaching

Those completing the program were:

41%

more likely to reduce risk for high blood pressure than those in the control group

27%

more likely to reduce risk for obesity than those in the control group

19%

more likely to reduce risk for physical inactivity than those in the control group

Telephonic wellness coaching

Those completing the program were:

53%

more likely to reduce risk for high blood pressure than those in the control group

2x

as likely to reduce risk for tobacco use than those in the control group

38%

more likely to reduce risk for obesity than those in the control group

Biometric screening

Those completing the program were:

75%

more likely to reduce risk for high cholesterol than those in the control group

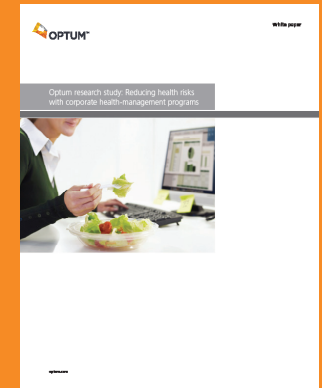
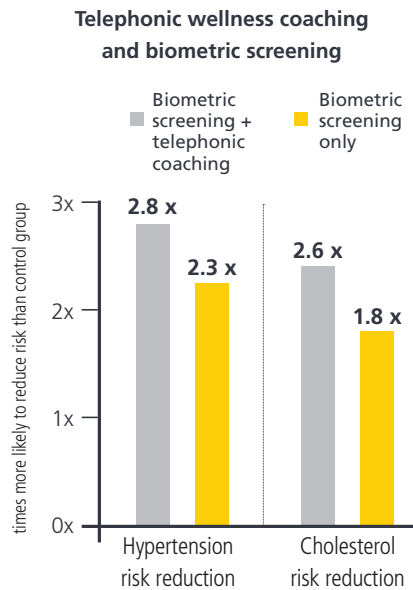
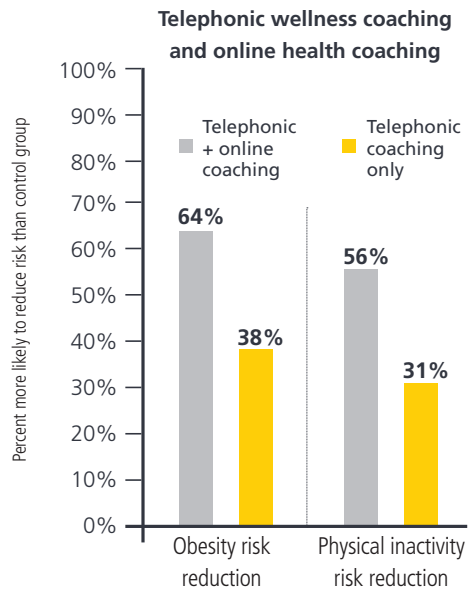
more than 2x

as likely to reduce risk for high blood pressure than those in the control group

Overall, high-risk individuals who completed an Optum health-management program achieved a significant reduction in risk. However, some risks also increase. This “net change” is addressed on page 4 of this paper.

Multiple intervention results

Completing more than one Optum health-management program led to a marked reduction in risk.



For an in-depth look at the full study results, read the entire report,
“Reducing health risks with corporate health-management programs.”

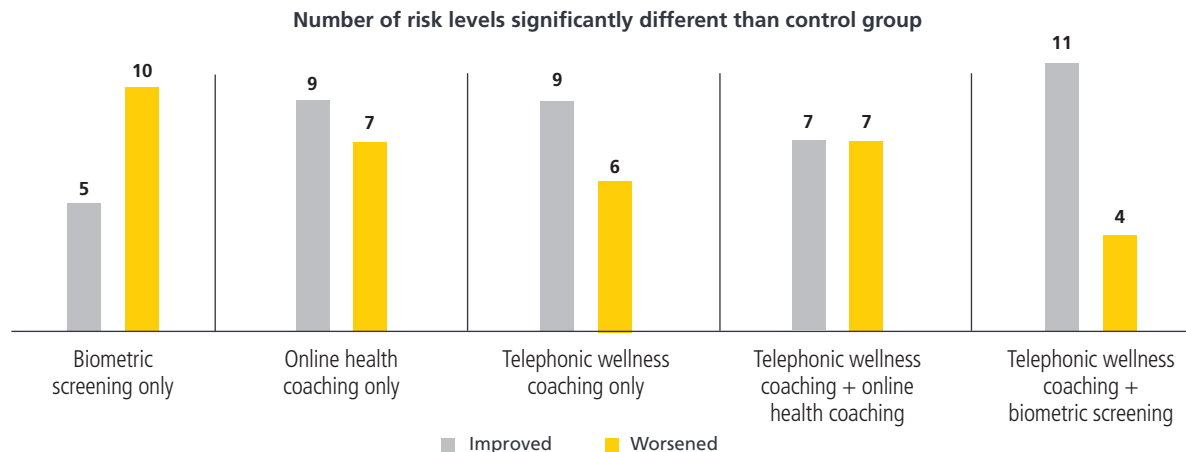
Risk migration

Participants may have some health risk factors worsen at the same time that some of their health risks improve. For example, an individual may stop smoking but gain some weight.

Additionally, for a given health risk factor, individuals can improve or worsen their risk level (i.e., they can move from being obese to overweight).

When comparing the percentage of intervention participants who improved or worsened from a given risk level:

- All interventions had a net equal or net improvement in the number of levels that were significantly different than the control group, except biometric screenings only.
- Telephonic wellness coaching and biometric screenings combined had the largest net improvement.



Conclusion

High-risk individuals participating in an Optum health-management program can significantly reduce their risks. In addition, health risk improvement can be optimized when individuals participate in more than one program. These are key takeaways for employer groups looking to impact health risk within their organizations.