Johnson & Johnson is a pioneer in employee health promotion. Its programs go back to 1979. J&J’s health and wellness services are collectively designed to help employees and their families lead healthy, productive, and balanced lives. The J&J programs fall into four broad areas:

1. Employee Assistance (EAP) and LIFEWORKS Programs-help employees address personal issues and achieve balance between work and personal life.

Through these two programs employees can receive help in finding and evaluating child and elder care, developing home budget, writing a will, improving time management skills, and selecting a realtor. Employees are offered alternative work arrangements, such as flextime, job sharing, and work at home. Time off with pay is available to provide emergency care for a family member. And some company locations provide onsite childcare centers.

1. Proactive Health Assessments

The Health Assessments program includes several levels of services. The first level is a confidential health screening program consisting of a 19 page questionnaire that becomes part of a health risk profile. A nurse practitioner goes over the results with the employees, takes their blood pressure, ad tests their pulse while they exercise. The second level of the program, if an employee decides to continue with the program, consists of exercise, stress management, blood pressure control, moderation of drinking, diet and weight control, and smoking cessation. The goal is to detect health problems early on, and then provide information and potential solutions, ranging from regular exercise to behavior modification and counseling.

1. Workplace Health

Workplace Health programs are designed to prevent work related illness and injuries. J&J has altered the work environment by establishing a smoke free corporate headquarter and regional office, improving nutritional value in company cafeterias, and providing messages about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The goals of the program are basic: stop smoking, eat more fruit and fewer fatty foods, exercise regularly, and buckle your seat belt. Workplace Health programs designed to prevent work related illness and injuries include improving the ergonomics of the work environment.

1. Wellness and Fitness Services

A long term evaluation of the financial and health impact of J&J’s health and wellness programs was conducted by an outside consulting organization. The evaluation included a financial analysis of medical insurance claims for J&J employees in the US who participated in the Health and Wellness Program from 1995-1999. The study found that participating employees had significantly lowered medical expenses and achieved overall improvements in several health risk categories, such as high cholesterol, hypertension, and cigarette smoking. The reduction in medical care costs amounted to a savings per employee of $225 annually. The savings came from fewer hospital admissions and mental health visits, and less use of outpatient services. More than 90% of all eligible US employees chose to participate in the wellness, fitness, and health risk assessment portions of the health and wellness program. There were reductions in tobacco use, sedentary lifestyle, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, low dietary fiber intake, and poor motor vehicle safety practices. The health and wellness services program has been so successful that J&J sells it to other corporations in more than 30 countries and 20 languages. Because of the program’s integrated services and longevity, many corporations study it.

The Credo

The health and wellness services program at J&J is compatible with the corporate credo and culture. The credo, written in 1943 by Robert Johnson, son of the founder, stresses honesty, integrity, and putting people before profits. The credo begins, “We believe our first responsibility is to the doctors, nurses and patients, to mothers, and fathers and all others who use our products and services. In meeting their needs, everything we do must be of high quality.” By today’s standards this may sound simplistic, but in 1943 it received wide attention because it put customers first, followed by employees, with stockholders last.

Fortune magazine has consistently named J&J as the most communally and environmentally responsible company. J&J’s current CEO, Ralph Larsen, says, “The Credo shouldn’t be viewed as some kind of social welfare program. It’s just plain good business.”