



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trindel Safety Award  
Presentation on 4-26-11 in the  
Board Chambers

## Working at your desk...

How did we ever manage without computers? Technology has certainly improved the efficiency of modern office workers. However, sitting at a desk five days a week, eight or more hours a day, is sometimes more physically taxing than manual labor. There are several bodily risks associated with prolonged computer use:

**FATIGUE:** Because of the sedentary nature of computer tasks, employees who work at video display terminals (VDT's) complain about fatigue. Lack of exertion during the day can make you feel listless and achy simply because the human body was designed for movement. Sitting too long can also cause back and neck pain or circulation problems with your legs.

There are several ways to energize yourself when confined to working at your desk: Proper sitting posture is an essential part of overcoming fatigue. No matter what kind of chair you use, it's important to keep your neck, back, and spine in a straight line. When writing, don't hunch your shoulders over; bend forward from the hips. If you don't have a foot rest, use a couple of telephone books to elevate your legs. Raising your knees above your hips will improve circulation and take the strain off your back.

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## Ways to Prevent Back Injury



Back injuries continue to be a huge problem in the workplace and at home. Follow these four tips to keep your back safe and sound:

1. **EXERCISE TO KEEP** fit and flexible. Building your core (abs) muscles helps you develop a strong back and be less prone to injury.
2. **MAKE SURE YOU** keep good posture whether you're standing or sitting. Sitting or standing straight takes pressure off of your back. Use a lumbar pillow or even a rolled up towel for lower back support if you sit for long periods.
3. **ASK FOR HELP** if an object is too heavy or awkward to carry. If no one is available, wait until help arrives or use a hand truck. Don't rely on a back belt.
4. **ALWAYS BE AWARE** of your back, and avoid quick, jerky movements that can cause back injuries.

# Good Lifting Techniques

- **Plant** your feet firmly on the ground and stand as close to the load as possible.
- **Squat** and keep your back straight.
- **Use** your leg muscles (not your back) to help you lift. Tighten abdominal muscles too.
- **Avoid** twisting and turning. Turn by moving your feet, not your back.
- **Don't** lift or reach for heavy loads above your waist.



# Sprains & Strains

Sprains and strains are one of the most common workplace injuries. So how do they happen? Most are the result of improper lifting! Are you prepared to deal with them if someone suffers one on the job?

Test your knowledge of sprains and strains by answering **True** or **False** to the following questions:

1. To treat a sprain or strain, it's best to place ice on the injured area for at least 30 minutes.
2. Strains are injuries to a tendon, the tissue that connects muscles to bone.
3. The easiest way to prevent sprains and strains is to prepare for a job before anyone starts working.
4. Muscle spasms, bruises and stiffness are all signs of a strain.

## ANSWERS

1. **FALSE**...The sprained or strained area should only be iced for 20 minutes at a time, four to eight times per day. Any longer than that can lead to frostbite or other cold injuries.
2. **TRUE**...Strains are tendon injuries that usually occur in the back, upper thigh and elbow. Sprains are injuries to ligaments and usually happen in the ankle, knee and wrist.
3. **TRUE**...Preparation reduces the chance someone will suffer a sprain or strain. To prevent sprains and strains, have workers stretch for five to 10 minutes before each shift. Also remind them to plan how they're going to lift heavy boxes and objects before they start the job.
4. **TRUE**...Muscle spasms, bruising and stiffness are symptoms of both sprains and strains. Very rapid bruising is a sign of a sprain.

# Eye Safety



Every day, about 2,000 U.S. workers suffer a job-related eye injury, says the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. With a statistic like that, no Supervisor can afford to even one staffer to skip wearing their eye PPE. So how can you give your staffers a wake-up call about PPE? Have them answer **TRUE** or **FALSE** to the following questions to see how much they know about eye safety:

1. You're more likely to suffer an eye injury from a flying object than from chemical contact.
2. Cracks, gouges or dents are the only signs of deficient safety goggles.
3. If a co-worker has his or her eyeball cut or punctured, our first response should be to irrigate the eye with warm water.

## ANSWERS

1. **TRUE**...Roughly 70% of eye injuries occur because of flying objects. But it's clearly important to wear eye PPE around chemicals, because getting chemicals in your eyes is also a hazard.
2. **FALSE**...Cracks and dents are signs of deteriorating PPE, but they're not the only signs. Excessively rigid or flexible parts can also mean your PPE might need to be replaced. Check PPE to make sure it's in good condition before you start working.
3. **FALSE**...Eye injuries are tricky to handle and if you're not trained to respond to them, you shouldn't. The first thing you should do if one of your co-workers suffers an eye injury is to call for medical help. While you're on the phone, ask medical professional what to do and follow their advice until help arrives.

# Near-miss Checklist

A near miss is an event that could have caused a serious injury or illness, but didn't. For example, a co-worker fails to balance his forklift load and when he turns the corner, the load slides off, nearly hitting another employee. Report any near miss directly to your supervisor, even if nothing happened, so steps can be taken to minimize the chances of it happening again.

Treat it like an incident and use this checklist for guidance:

- ✓ Describe what happened in detail. What seemed to cause the near miss? For example, was poor lighting a factor?  
Human error?
- ✓ Where did the near miss occur? If outdoors, what were the weather conditions?
- ✓ When did the near miss occur? Date? Time?
- ✓ What was the chain of events that led up to the near miss?
- ✓ Who was involved? Employees? Others?
- ✓ Were safety procedures followed?
- ✓ Was everyone involved wearing protective gear?

Document your information and gather any evidence of (photos, damaged tools) or witnesses to the near miss.

Remember: A near miss is a warning sign that something is wrong.

# Ways to Cut Sodium From Your Diet

To cut sodium, try lemon juice, herbs and spices, hot sauce, onion or garlic powder, flavored oils, pepper, or vinegar instead of salt.

Help is on the way: Some major food manufacturers are responding to the Food and Drug Administration's call to reduce the salt in processed food, making it easier for consumers to limit their sodium intake.

**Challenge No. 1:** Seventy-seven percent of salt consumed comes from packaged, processed and restaurant food.

Pick products with the lowest sodium (salt) content per serving (aim for 140mg or less) by checking nutritional labels. Choose unsalted, low-sodium and sodium-free items whenever possible. Major sources of sodium include cheese products, tomato sauce or juice, soups, condiments, canned foods, prepared mixes, and lunch meats. When dining out, ask for low-sodium menu choices, order salad dressing on the side, and request little or no cheese.

**Challenge No. 2:** Medications can be a source of high amounts of sodium.

Scan the ingredients of over the counter drugs (such as antacids) for sodium, and look for low-sodium versions. If you use bicarbonate of soda, look for no-sodium versions.

**Challenge No. 3:** How do I cook without salt?

Choose raw ingredients without added salt, especially when purchasing broth, butter, bullion, soup, nuts and sauces.

## Uncovering a FOOD ALLERGY



Though only a few have true food allergies, one out of three people believe they or a family member have one.

**Why?** Many of the same symptoms (abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, asthma) can arise from a food allergy, which involves an immune reaction, or from a food intolerance, which does not. Non-allergic food reactions can occur from food poisoning, histamine-containing foods, lactose intolerance, food additives, gluten intolerance or certain conditions of the gastrointestinal tract.

**Your health care provider** can help you determine if you have a true allergy or food intolerance. The first steps are a detailed patient history with questions such as “Do you always react after eating this food?” or “Did antihistamines help?” and a physical exam.

**Keeping a log** of foods and symptoms can also single out suspect foods. Or, you may be asked to try an elimination diet, where you avoid the suspected food. Blood and skin tests can help identify food allergies, although a positive result doesn't always mean you have an allergy. Skin tests can't be used in some instances, such as when people have severe eczema or are severely allergic. Only the oral food challenge can definitively diagnose a food allergy, according to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. In this test, specific foods are avoided and then reintroduced under medical supervision.

**Positive results:** **If you're diagnosed with a food allergy, contact your local hospital for information and support groups.**

## Get to know your Department Safety Representative



**Melisa Leonardo** of Juvenile Hall is the Juvenile Hall Secretary, Volunteer/Internship Coordinator, Training Manager and the Department Safety Representative.

*Favorite Safety Quote... "Prepare and prevent, don't repair and repent"*

## What's Wrong With This Picture?????



I hope you all are enjoying this safety newsletter.  
If you have any safety stories/information or suggestions you would like  
posted, please send me an email.

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