

FEBRUARY & MARCH
2011

San Benito County Safety & Health Newsletter



ANNOUNCEMENTS

DSR Quarterly Mtg.
on 3-11-11 at 9am

Furlough Office Closure Date
for some County Offices
Thursday, March 31st

Stair Safety



Walk slowly when you go up or down and always hold the handrail.

Carry only manageable items that do not block your vision or keep you from holding the handrail.

Keep stairs clear of clutter.

Most accidents happen when something is left where it doesn't belong.

Light the way. At work, report lights that are out on stairwells. At home, make sure there's a working light switch at the top and bottom. Light sensitive nightlights are helpful too.

Never use wooden stairs while wearing socks. Make sure footwear has nonskid bottoms to avoid slips and falls.

Safe Start

Keep your work area and pathways clean and free from clutter.

Make sure that flammable materials are kept far from sources of ignition.

Take the time to maintain and clean equipment after use. Don't allow dirt, grease or grime to build up on equipment.

Know where all emergency equipment, including a fire extinguisher, is located.

Set a good example with your actions. Abide by the Injury Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP) and your Code of Safe Practices (COSP).

Use all required gear and equipment properly.

Individual Highlights:

Stair Safety	1
Safe Start	1
Step on Rusty Nail	2
Depression	3
Fitness at Work	3
CO: Silent Killer	4
Honey Tangerines	4
Get to know your DSR	5
What's Wrong With this	
Picture	6

If you step on a rusty nail, will you really get tetanus?



The Rusty Nail Wives Tale

The basic idea here is that stepping on a rusty nail—or rather, the wound resulting from stepping on a rusty nail—will result in tetanus, what is sometimes referred to as “lockjaw.” Tetanus is a nasty disease that causes the stiffening of muscles and does affect the face; the jaws can’t be opened, hence the nickname. The source of this wives tale comes from World War II, where many soldiers were infected with and died from tetanus, mostly infected via deep puncture wounds. Hence this wives tale is more of a half-truth; the wounds from stepping on a nail can cause tetanus, but the rust has nothing whatsoever to do with it.

Infection

Tetanus comes from infection breeding where there is little to no oxygen, so a deep puncture would certainly qualify as a potential danger. It is the dirt that may have been on the puncturing instrument that can lead to infection, so a nail needs no rust to lead to tetanus, just dirt. In the trenches of WWII there were plenty of sharp, dirty objects that would qualify, and after the tetanus vaccine was created and introduced, the suffering and deaths dropped sharply. Here was a case where the tetanus vaccine made a lot of sense, as the soldiers were in a very hazardous environment with a high chance of contracting the disease.

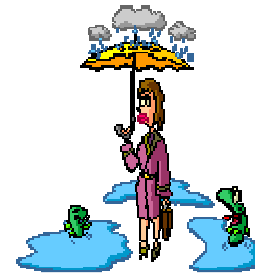
Should You vaccinate?

Ultimately the decision a parent makes about whether or not to vaccinate their child should be made after proper research with qualified sources. Certainly there are less chances of sustaining deep, dirty puncture wounds in every day life than a soldier in the trenches of The Big One, but the possibility exists. So, too, do proper antibiotic treatments for treating deep puncture wounds—thus if you opted out of a tetanus shot when you were young there are still treatment options if a wayward rusty nail finds your foot.

Why the Link between Rust and Tetanus?

How did “rusty nail” get linked up with infecting lockjaw in the first place? Likely it came about as stories of soldiers suffering and dying from tetanus were released, and as is common with many fallacies and wives tales, correlation implied causation. A good filter of logic to apply to this—and many—situation is “correlation does not imply causation”. This simply means that just because two events occurred at roughly the same time, there does not mean a cause and effect relationship exists. In this case a person steps on a rusty nail and develops tetanus; it is easy to say the rusty nail caused the tetanus, but in reality the dirty wound not properly treated caused the lockjaw, not the rust on the nail.

When Depression Hits Most Often



Depression is a troubling illness. It changes your mood, sleep patterns, appetite and numbs your ability to enjoy life. Depression can strike at any time, but certain circumstances increase your chances of sinking into it.

- AFTER A LOSS:** Bereavement, divorce, unemployment – all of these are triggers.
- AROUND PREGNANCY:** Before and after delivering a baby approximately 7 percent of women experience an episode of major depression. Twice as many experience less severe mood swings.
- DURING HORMONAL CHANGES:** Women of childbearing age are at higher risk than men. Some women experience depressed moods prior to menstruation, as well as at the onset of menopause.
- IN WINTER:** In Northern latitudes, where there is less sunlight in the fall and winter, some people are more prone to develop the blues. This “seasonal affective disorder” (SAD) may get better in the spring, even without treatment.
- AFTER A HEART ATTACK:** Up to one in three survivors of cardiac arrest report depression. Chronic pain and other chronic illnesses appear to be risk factors as well.
- FOLLOWING SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** Heavy drinkers double their chances of becoming depressed. Other additions, and even some prescription medications, can increase the risk as well.
- AFTER PREVIOUS DEPRESSION:** If you’ve had depression before, you’re more likely to experience another episode. Fortunately, treatment can help you learn how to reduce the risk.
- WHAT TO DO:** Talk to your health care provider for treatment referrals and suggestions. Medication, counseling or exercise could soon brighten your mood.



Fitness at Work

Many of us sit longer than our bodies were designed for, reducing blood circulation and productivity, and straining the back, shoulders and neck. Despite a hectic work schedule, you can support your fitness goals with mini-workouts for:

FLEXIBILITY

- Starting with feet flat, raise and lower your heels. Next, switch to lifting your toes. Finish with ankle rolls.
- In a chair, stretch both arms over your head and hold, then extend one hand higher than the other and switch.

STRENGTH

- Do bicep curls or extensions with a resistance band or filled water bottle.
- Try desk pushups. Facing your desk, place your hands at shoulder width and slowly lift and lower your torso toward the desk.

HEART FUNCTION

- While seated, rapidly tap your feet on the floor for 30 seconds.
- Walking is better than standing, which is better than sitting. Use the stairs to go on the restroom on a different floor.

See a physical therapist or personal trainer. Exercise software and apps are available too. As always, check with your health care provider before starting any new exercise program.

CO: Do Staffers Know About This Silent Killer?



Carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, toxic gas, is known as the silent killer.

The symptoms of CO poisoning range from headaches to death in the most severe cases.

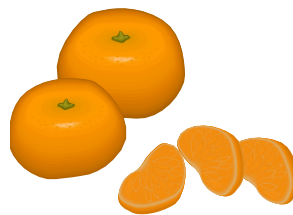
Do your workers know about the dangers of carbon monoxide and how to prevent CO poisoning? Have them answer TRUE or FALSE to the following questions to find out.

1. Machines that run on electricity or fuel can create carbon monoxide and put you in danger of CO poisoning.
2. Small fuel-powered machines or tools aren't as dangerous as big machines, because they create less CO while running.
3. If you suspect you've inhaled CO, it's best to slowly move out of the area and get fresh air.

ANSWERS

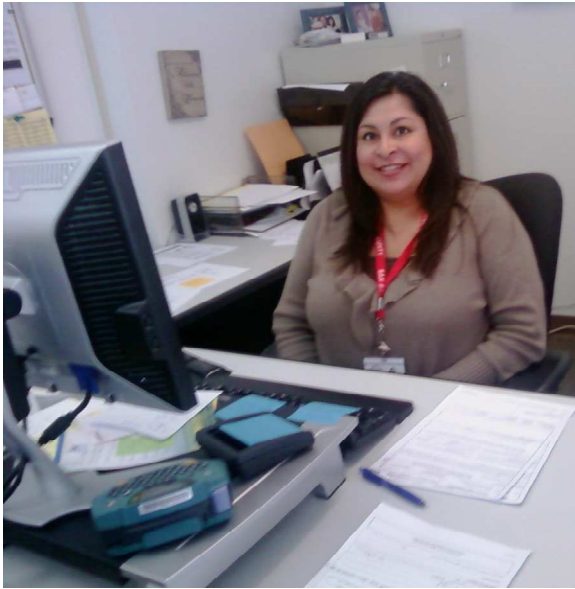
1. FALSE. Machines that run on fuel create CO, but machines that run on electricity do not. Whenever you use a fuel-powered machine, be aware of the safety steps you need to follow to prevent CO inhalation.
2. FALSE. The size of the machine doesn't matter. Any machine that creates CO puts you in danger. That's why it's crucial never to use a fuel-powered machine in an enclosed/small space unless it's properly ventilated, and you're wearing the proper PPE per OSHA's standards.
3. TRUE. Physical exertion speeds up the effects of CO on your body and can make CO poisoning worse. Slowly moving from the area won't speed up CO poisoning as much. Exposure to fresh air can help those with mild CO poisoning.

Honey Tangerines



The super-sweet variety of mandarin oranges is in season from January to April. Tangerines are high in vitamin C and are a source of vitamin A and B-vitamin folate. Plus, they have just 40 calories and 8 grams of sugar per fruit, so go ahead and enjoy a few. Add wedges to salads and fruit salsas.

Get to know your Department Safety Representative



April Greig is a secretary as well as the Department Safety Representative for the Behavioral Health Department.

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.

Dina Bies
481 Fourth Street
Hollister, CA 95023
(831) 636-4000
(831) 636-4010 fax
dbies@cosb.us