

OCTOBER 2010

San Benito County Safety & Health Newsletter



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Don't forget to always wear your County Badge. It's been issued for your safety and security.

Office Closure on Monday,
October 11, 2010

Susan Thompson's Retirement
Get Together on 10/8/10

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Can A Five-Minute Fix Reduce Injuries? Find Out!

The number of work-related musculoskeletal disorders ranges from about eight to 13 out of every 100 workers, according to OSHA estimates.

Could you become part of that statistic? You don't have to. A simple five-minute stretch session can actually reduce soft tissue injuries.

Answer **TRUE** or **FALSE** to the following statements to test your knowledge about stretching.

1. Stretching is good because it cools the muscles down.
2. You should start stretching as soon as you get to work
3. You should hold a stretch until you feel a pull, but don't continue if you feel pain.
4. Stretching should be done quickly, and held for about five seconds.

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ:

1. **FALSE.** Stretching is good because it warms the muscles up. You don't want to work with cold, tight muscles since a warm muscle is less likely to tear.
2. **TRUE.** You should stretch before you start your shift. It also helps to do some physical activity first. Try marching in place for three to five minutes to get the blood flowing and the muscles ready to work.
3. **TRUE.** Stretching should be done only until you feel a pull. But remember: You should stop stretching if you feel any pain or discomfort. Any pain is a sign that your muscles are being torn, not stretched.
4. **FALSE.** Stretching should be done slowly, and should be held in position for about 30 seconds. However, some stretches may require their own hold time depending on the difficulty of the movement.

MRSA Infections

MRSA infections, as with all staph are usually spread by having contact with someone's skin infection or personal items they have used, like towels, bandages, or razors that touched their infected skin. These infections are most likely to be spread in places where people are in close contact with others – for instance, schools and locker rooms where athletes might share razors or towels.

Factors that have been associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions and poor hygiene. People may be more at risk in locations where these factors are common, including: athletic facilities, dormitories, military barracks, households, correctional facilities and daycare centers.

MRSA is found on people and not naturally found in the environment (e.g., soil, the ocean, lakes). MRSA could get on objects and surfaces outside the body if someone touches infected skin or certain areas of the body where these bacteria can live (like the nose) and then touches the object or surface. Another way that items can be contaminated with staph and MRSA is if they have direct contact with a person's skin infection. Keeping skin infections covered with bandages is the best way to reduce the chance that surfaces will be contaminated with MRSA.

Even if surfaces have MRSA on them, this does not mean that you will definitely get an infection if you touch these surfaces. MRSA is most likely to cause problems when you have a cut or scrape that is not covered. The best defense is good hygiene. Keep your hands clean, use a barrier like clothing or towels between you and any surface you share with others like gym equipment and shower immediately after activities that involve direct skin contact with others. These are easy ways to decrease your risk of getting MRSA.

The key to preventing MRSA infections is for everyone to practice good hygiene:

1. Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand rub.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

In the community, most MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. They often first look like spider bites or bumps that are red, swollen and painful. Please see below for photos of MRSA images.

Treatment for MRSA skin infections may include having a healthcare professional drain the infection and in some cases prescribe an antibiotic. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TREAT A MRSA SKIN INFECTION BY YOURSELF.** If you think you might have an infection, cover the affected skin, wash your hands, and contact your healthcare provider.



Halloween Safety Tips for Adults



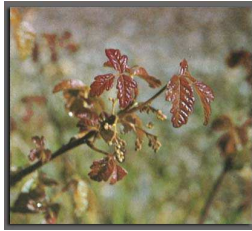
Parents of trick-or-treating kids can get so caught up in the fun themselves that they might forget some simple safety ideas that could keep everyone out of trouble. Having a fun and safe Halloween will make it all worthwhile!

Kids love Halloween! They get to dress up and get free candy! What a perfect holiday! Give your kids some precious Halloween memories that they'll have for life.

- ⚠️ Know the route your kids will be taking if you aren't going with them. Let them know that they are to check in with you every hour, by phone or by stopping back at home. Make sure that they know not to deviate from the planned route so that you always know where they will be.
- ⚠️ Help your young child pick out or make a costume that will be safe. Make sure that it's fire proof or treated with fire retardant. If they are wearing a mask of any kind, make sure that the eye holes are large enough for good peripheral vision.
- ⚠️ Know what other activities a child may be attending, such as parties or school functions. If they are going to be at a friend's home, get the phone number and make sure that you've met the parents.
- ⚠️ Make sure you set a time that your kids should be home by. Make sure they know how important it is for them to be home on time or to call immediately if something happens and they are going to be delayed.
- ⚠️ Kids will be kids. Explain to kids of all ages the difference between tricks and vandalism. Throwing eggs at a house may seem funny but they need to know the other side of the coin as well, that clean up and damages can ruin Halloween for everyone. If they are caught vandalizing, make them clean up the mess they've made.
- ⚠️ Serve your kids a filling meal before trick or treating and they won't be as tempted to eat any candy before they bring it home for you to check. Check your local grocery store or craft store for Halloween cook books full of tasty treats on a horror theme for both kids and adults.
- ⚠️ Make sure that if your child is carrying a prop, such as a scythe, butcher knife or a pitchfork, that the tips are smooth and flexible enough to not cause injury if fallen on. Make sure that costumes won't get in the way when they are walking, which could cause them to trip.
- ⚠️ Teach your kids about not getting into strangers cars or talking to strangers, no matter what the person says to them. Tell them what to do should this happen, to scream as loud as they can to draw attention and to run away as fast as they can to someplace safe.
- ⚠️ Be sure to show your children how to cross a street properly. They should always look both ways before crossing the street and should only cross at corners or crosswalks. Make sure that if you have more than one child, they know to take the hand of the younger child when they cross a street.



Make Halloween a fun, safe and happy time for your kids and they'll carry on the tradition that you taught them to their own families some day!

Poison Oak Survival Information



Learn what poison ivy looks like and avoid it.

Myths vs. Facts

 Myth	 Fact
Poison Ivy rash is contagious.	Rubbing the rashes won't spread poison ivy to other parts of your body (or to another person). You spread the rash only if urushiol oil -- the sticky, resin like substance that causes the rash -- has been left on your hands.
You can catch poison ivy simply by being near the plants	Direct contact is needed to release urushiol oil . Stay away from forest fires, direct burning, or anything else that can cause the oil to become airborne such as a lawnmower, trimmer, etc.
Leaves of three, let them be	Poison sumac has 7 to 13 leaves on a branch, although poison ivy and oak have 3 leaves per cluster.
Do not worry about dead plants	Urushiol oil stays active on any surface, including dead plants, for up to 5 years.
Breaking the blisters releases urushiol oil that can spread	Not true. But your wounds can become infected and you may make the scarring worse. In very extreme cases, excessive fluid may need to be withdrawn by a doctor.
I've been in poison ivy many times and never broken out. I'm immune.	Not necessarily true. Upwards of 90% of people are allergic to urushiol oil, it's a matter of time and exposure. The more times you are exposed to urushiol, the more likely it is that you will break out with an allergic rash. For the first time sufferer, it generally takes longer for the rash to show up - generally in 7 to 10 days.

The best approach is washing with soap and water. This will reduce the severity of the rash, but this is often impractical because it has to be done at once. (after 10 minutes, only 50% of the resin is removable, and by 30 minutes only 10%).

Once it begins, the rash will usually clear on its own by 14-21 days. Treatment is directed at controlling the itching. Oral antihistamines like Benadryl may help the itch somewhat, but often they do no more than make people drowsy. Cortisone creams, whether over the counter or by prescription, are only helpful if applied right away before blisters appear or much later when the blisters have dried up. Compresses with cool water can help dry the ooze faster.

When the rash is severe, such as when it affects the face or causes extensive blistering, oral steroids for example, prednisone can help produce rapid improvement. Seek medical advice when exposed if you are highly allergic.

Get to know your Department Safety Representative



Enrique & wife Kerri Limon

**One of Enrique's favorite safety quotes are:
"Safety-it's cheaper than a trip to the ER"**

ENRIQUE LIMON of the Assessor's Department has been a Department Safety Representative for 3 months now. In addition to being the Department Safety Representative he is also an Auditor/Appraiser. On his spare time, he enjoys golfing, flying radio model airplanes and spending time with his family and two golden retrievers.

Prior to working for the County, Enrique was in the Air Force for 8 years and moonlighted as a bouncer so security and safety has always been a priority. He then became the Chief of Security & Loss Prevention Manager for two Marriott Hotel properties in Oklahoma City, OK and Palm Desert, CA. While employed with the Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City, OK, Enrique took over as Chief of Security and implemented a Safety education program which resulted in 354 plus days accident free for a hotel that was experiencing losses due to employee accidents in the \$200,000 in previous years. This was no easy task. The hotel had numerous departments consisting of restaurants, banquets, catering, maintenance, front desk and housekeeping with a total employee count just over 200 people.

Enrique is a great addition to our Safety Committee and we all look forward to a long lasting tenure.

10 Winning Ways To Ease Workplace Stress

1. Don't leave home without eating a healthy breakfast – a cup of juice or coffee won't suffice.
2. Pack energizing snacks (yogurt, cheese, popcorn, fruits, vegetables, peanut butter).
3. Pinpoint your stress triggers, and find ways to counteract them before getting angry or upset.
4. Focus on solving problems rather than getting mired in negativity and complaining.
5. Limit Caffeine, which can make you feel edgy and nervous – drink water throughout the day instead.
6. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and vividly imagine a scene that makes you feel good.
7. Accept changes in the workplace as normal, not threatening.
8. Take a break from your work area when it is permitted.
9. Keep a happy file with pictures, notes or other things that give you comfort or make you laugh.
10. At the end of the each day, clear your work area and plan for the next day.

First Aid Refresher

Supervisor Safety Bulletin 9/8/10

If an emergency happens, do your workers know how to respond?

It's a crucial question. If someone suffers an injury and the rest of your crew jump in to respond, they could hurt more than help.

Ask workers to respond **TRUE** or **FALSE** to test their knowledge of emergency response.

1. If someone is bleeding severely, the first thing you should do is apply a tourniquet.
2. No matter what, if someone stops breathing, you should administer CPR right away.
3. You should call 911 before you help the victim, even if it delays treatment by a few moments.
4. Once you know the injured person is breathing and has a stable pulse, you should check for bleeding and broken bones next.

ANSWERS

1. **TRUE.** You should never use a tourniquet for minor injuries. But for severe cases, a tourniquet applies strong pressure to the veins, which can slow down extreme bleeding.
2. **FALSE.** You should only administer CPR if you are certified. If you aren't certified, you should administer rescue breathing instead.
3. **TRUE.** It seems wrong to delay helping the victim, but calling 911 before you administer any of these rescue steps is crucial. It's the only way to ensure emergency professional arrive ASAP.
4. **TRUE.** Bleeding and broken bones are secondary injuries. Breathing and stable pulse (between 60 and 100 beats per minute) are the most important vital statistics, so check on those first.

How to Provide Rescue Breathing for an Adult During First Aid

Many types of injury can cause breathing to stop, depriving the brain of precious oxygen. Rescue breathing - also known as "[mouth](#) to mouth resuscitation" - can save a life.



1. Determine whether the surrounding scene is safe.
2. Determine whether the injured person is breathing. Position the injured person on his or her back, being extremely careful not to move or twist the head, neck or spine. If several rescuers are present, use their assistance to minimize this danger.
4. Maintain an open airway while you pinch the injured person's nose shut.
5. Give two long, slow breaths, being sure to maintain a seal between your mouth and his or hers. Check again for breathing and pulse
7. Give one slow breath every five seconds for 12 breaths, if the person is still not breathing but has a pulse.
8. Repeat the steps in this section until help arrives, until the injured person begins breathing again, or until you are too exhausted to continue.

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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