

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 2015

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Daily Safety and Health Topics

September 2015

Focus on Hazard Recognition:

Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants



September 1, 2015

Safety Focus

SPIDERS & INSECTS

Awareness is a good way to prevent being stung or bitten by spiders and insects because knowing what type of habitat and how they behave we can use caution. Most spiders live in damp, dark spaces such as woodpiles, empty boxes, underground pedestals, shrubbery, closets, etc. Be cautious and use a questioning attitude while working in these areas. To protect yourself from biting and stinging insects, wear long pants, socks, long-sleeved shirts and gloves. Use insect repellents that contain DEET or picaridin. Treat bites and stings with over-the-counter products that relieve pain and infection.

Health Tip of the Day

BEST DEFENSE AGAINST BUG BITES

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best defense against bug bites is to use insect repellent containing a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-registered active ingredient for use on skin or clothing. CDC recommends DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus (not “pure” oil of lemon eucalyptus) against mosquitoes. For ticks, repellents with 20 percent or more DEET are recommended. Always follow the directions on the package. Wear long sleeves and pants when possible.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 2, 2015

Safety Focus

POISON IVY-RELATED PLANTS

Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac have poisonous sap (urushiol) in their roots, stems, leaves and fruits. The urushiol may be deposited on the skin by direct contact with plants or by contact with contaminated objects, such as clothing, shoes, tools and animals. Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, tucked into boots. Wear leather gloves. Apply barrier creams to exposed skin. (Wechem – SPC, “Work Out”) Know how to identify poisonous plants and the signs and symptoms. Keep a strong questioning attitude and be sure what you are working around. Have rubbing alcohol available. It removes the oily resin up to 30 minutes after exposure. If you have poison ivy, use “Zanfel” which can be purchased from your local Walmart, Rite Aid, or Walgreen’s. The product has been approved by Entergy.

Health Tip of the Day

KEEPING PETS SAFE IN SUMMER

Summertime can be a fun time to enjoy the outdoors with your pets. Just remember that the summer heat can be a challenge for our furry friends because they don’t sweat, so they cannot cool off as efficiently as their owners. Pets can experience dehydration, sunburn and even heat stroke in the summer heat. Take precautions by avoiding exercise in the peak heat of the day. Provide your pet with plenty of shade and ventilation, have plenty of fresh water available at all times, and never leave your pet inside a hot car.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 3, 2015

Safety Focus

SNAKES

Please watch where you place your hands and feet when removing debris. If possible, don't place your fingers under debris you are moving. Wear heavy gloves. If you see a snake, step back and allow it to proceed. Wear boots at least 10 inches high. Watch for snakes sunning on fallen trees, limbs or other debris. A snake's striking distance is about half the total length of the snake. If bitten, note the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment. Keep bite victims still and calm to slow the spread of venom in case the snake is poisonous. Seek medical attention as soon as possible. DO NOT cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom. Apply first aid: lay the person down so that the bite is below the level of the heart, and cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

Health Tip of the Day

HEART ATTACK? TAKE ACTION!

Don't try to "tough out" what might be a heart attack by telling yourself that the symptoms will pass. Call 911 immediately! Every minute matters. Some heart attacks are sudden and intense but most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Some of the most common signs include chest discomfort (pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain); pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach; shortness of breath; nausea; sweating; or lightheadedness.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 4, 2015

Safety Focus

AVOIDING STINGS

Knowing how to avoid stings from bees, wasps, hornets and yellow jackets leads to a more enjoyable summer for everyone.

- Avoid walking barefoot in the grass (honeybees and bumblebees forage on white clover, a weed that grows in lawns throughout the U.S.).
- Never swat or flail at a flying insect. If need be, gently brush it aside or patiently wait for it to leave.
- Avoid wearing sweet-smelling perfumes, hairsprays, colognes and deodorants.
- Avoid wearing bright-colored clothing with flowery patterns. Bees may mistake you for a flower.
- Avoid the overconfidence trap and follow these tips to prevent stings.

If you have had an allergic reaction to an insect sting, it is important that you see an allergist. You have a 60 percent chance of having a similar or worse reaction if stung again. There is a treatment, venom immunotherapy, which is 97 percent effective in preventing future reactions.

Health Tip of the Day

IMMUNIZATIONS FOR KIDS

The kids will be heading back to school soon. As you check your back-to-school list, be sure your child's immunizations are up to date. If you are unsure what your school requires, talk with your school nurse. If you have questions or concerns about any immunizations, discuss them with your physician. For more information about immunizations, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 5, 2015

Safety Focus

RODENTS AND WILD OR STRAY ANIMALS

Dead and live animals can spread diseases such as rat bite fever and rabies. Avoid contact with wild or stray animals. Avoid contact with rats or rat-contaminated buildings. If you can't avoid contact, wear protective gloves and wash your hands regularly. Get rid of dead animals as soon as possible. If bitten or scratched, get medical attention immediately.

Health Tip of the Day

FOOD SAFETY AT HOME

You can significantly reduce your risk for foodborne illness by handling foods properly when cooking at home. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, four simple tips can help you keep food safe: 1. Wash hands often when preparing food. 2. Keep raw meats and ready-to-eat foods separate. 3. Cook foods to proper temperatures. 4. Refrigerate foods promptly below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 6, 2015

Safety Focus

MOSQUITO BITES

To protect yourself from mosquito bites do the following:

- Wear light-colored long-sleeve shirts when possible.
- Use repellants (containing 20 percent to 30percent DEET) on exposed skin. (See note)
- Be aware of wooded areas and tall grass. They can be sites for mosquitoes and ticks.
- Be sure to check skin from head to toe, back and front, for a few days after spending time in wooded areas to ensure the characteristic red rash from Lyme disease is not found.
- Use your questioning attitude to make sure you protect yourself from mosquito bites.

NOTE: When applying repellants that contain DEET do not spray on your flame-retardant (FR) clothing. This can affect the fire-protection capability of the FR clothing.

Use only nonflammable products for application to FR clothing.

Health Tip of the Day

DROWSY AT THE WHEEL?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, 60 percent of survey participants reported that they had driven while feeling drowsy and 37 percent admitted to falling asleep at the wheel during the past year. Drowsy driving is also common among teens. Take charge. Make sleep a priority, take a break every 100 miles or two hours on long trips, have a travel companion to talk with and share the driving, and avoid alcohol and medications that can make you sleepy. Stay awake and stay safe!

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September 7, 2015

Safety Focus

ANTS AROUND FLOODWATERS

Fire ants will form into a massive floating ball of ants around the queen to protect her during floods, which are one-way mounds spread. "That ball will float until it finds a dry place, usually the ground.

During flooding - Avoid contact with floating mats of fire ants. When working in floodwater, try to dress appropriately. Rubber boots, rain gear and gloves (cuffed) can help prevent ants from reaching the skin.

After flooding be cautious - Be aware that fire ants can be under anything. Fire ants love to get under old wood to re-establish their colony. Wear gloves, long sleeve shirts, long pants, socks and shoes. You may want to consider spraying insect repellent onto your shoes and lower pants leg. This may help deter foraging fire ants from climbing onto the legs.

If using shovels or other tools, spread talcum or baby powder on the handle. Fire ants cannot climb onto vertical surfaces dusted with talcum powder unless the surface gets wet or the powder is rubbed off.

Health Tip of the Day

TIME TO REMOVE TRANS FATS

The Food and Drug Administration recently announced that it is time for food companies to get rid of trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils). Although they have largely been phased out of most foods, the FDA says they are still a public health concern because they can raise "bad" cholesterol and lower "good" cholesterol. Generally, you'll find trans fats in processed foods such as frostings, pie crusts, biscuits, frozen pizza and vegetable shortenings. The best way to know if a food has trans fats is to look at the ingredient list. Products with trans fats will have partially hydrogenated oils listed as one of the ingredients.

D&I Focus

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Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 8, 2015

Safety Focus

ALLIGATORS

Alligators have a natural fear of humans, and usually begin a quick retreat when approached by people.

If you hear an alligator hiss, it's a warning that you are too close. If you have a close encounter with an alligator a few yards away, back away slowly. It is extremely rare for wild alligators to chase people, but they can run up to 35 miles per hour for short distances on land. Be careful near heavy vegetation in or near the water's edge.

An alligator that is surprised and alarmed by your approach may attack, thinking that it is being attacked itself.

If charged by an alligator, run away! Do *NOT* run in a zigzag. Move in as *straight* a line as possible away from it as fast as you reasonably can. Remember, while outdoors maintain a questioning attitude when there is a potential for an encounter with wildlife.

Health Tip of the Day

MAKING EXERCISE EASIER

If you find it difficult to fit in 30 minutes or more of exercise, consider exercising in smaller blocks of time. Dividing your time into two or three segments of 10-15 minutes per day might feel a little less daunting, and you will still receive the healthy benefits of exercise. For example, you might try fitting one short session in before work, a second during lunch, and a third in the evening. Inviting a friend to join in can make it more fun, too!

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 9, 2014

Safety Focus

BEES/WASPS/SPIDERS

Most insect stings/bites occur during summer and fall. Typically, insects will not sting/bite unless stepped on, touched, disturbed, or aggravated. The best way to avoid being stung or bitten is to be cautious and aware of your surroundings. There are many places that insects can dwell such as in meter pans, pedestals, inside wire reels, shrubs, around door entries, woodpiles, dark hidden places, etc. Keep a look out for these hidden hazards by using a questioning attitude. If you do come in contact with a bee or wasp, stay calm. Never strike or swing at a wasp or bee. Also, carry an approved can of spray such as Strike or Zapper with you if you suspect the area may be infested.

Health Tip of the Day

PERIMETER VS. AISLE SHOPPING

When you go grocery shopping, do you spend most of your time in the center aisles or around the perimeter of the store? According to a recent consumer research study, most people spend the majority of their time and grocery budget in the center aisle. Your path through the store can impact your food choices. By focusing on the perimeter of the store, you can stock up on fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables, seafood, dairy products and lean meats. Venture into the center aisles primarily for key staples such as whole-grain breads and cereals, dried beans and other wholesome foods.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 10, 2015

Safety Focus

WILD HOGS (FERAL HOGS)

Feral hogs are formidable and have been known to attack human beings. They have excellent senses of smell and hearing and normally avoid contact with humans.

There are occasions of hogs chasing hunters up trees, but these are rare, isolated instances. The vast majority of hogs flee from humans. However, should you find yourself nose-to-snout with an angry pig, the best defense is to climb the nearest tree and avoid the swing of its tusks.

Health Tip of the Day

BUILDING STRONG BONES STARTS EARLY

Building the “bone bank” during adolescence is the best way to prevent osteoporosis later in life. Maximum bone development generally takes place between the ages of 11 and 17. Bone mass reaches a plateau around age 26, then starts to decline at around age 35. Parents can educate kids early about making good everyday life choices for building strong bones. Staying physically active and getting enough calcium and vitamin D (preferably through calcium-rich foods) are essential for bone development.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 11, 2015

Safety Focus

TICK BITES – LYME DISEASE

Ticks are small spider-like animals (arachnids) that bite to fasten themselves onto the skin and feed on blood. Ticks live in the fur and feathers of many birds and animals. Tick bites occur most often during early spring to late summer and in areas where there are many wild animals and birds. Some ticks transmit bacteria that cause illnesses such as Lyme disease or Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

What you can do to decrease your risk of Lyme disease:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants for outdoor work.
- Tuck pant legs into socks and shirt into pants to protect your skin.
- Wear light-colored clothing and socks to help spot ticks.
- Inspect your body head to toe for ticks after working outdoors.
- Remove ticks with tweezers and avoid squeezing the tick's body.
- Clean bite sites with soap and water and consider getting the Lyme disease vaccine if you work in an occupation with increased risk of Lyme disease.

Health Tip of the Day

HOW MUCH FRUIT?

How much fruit should you eat? Depending on your calorie needs, current government recommendations suggest eating between 1 and 2.5 cups of fruit per day. What counts as a cup? A cup of fruit equals 1 whole piece of most fresh fruits, 1 cup of chopped fresh fruit, 1 cup of fruit packed in water or its own juices, 1 cup of 100 percent fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit. For the best prices and flavor, choose fresh fruits in season or choose canned or frozen fruits in any season. If you use canned or frozen fruits, look for options without added sugars or syrups.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 12, 2015

Safety Focus

WATCH OUT FOR DEER!

Each year in the United States, some 200 people are killed and more than 25,000 are injured in car-deer collisions. The impact on nature is equally tragic; more than 500,000 deer die in these accidents.

What you can do to avoid hitting a deer?

- Be particularly alert when driving in wildlife areas.
- Slow down and increase the following distance between you and other cars.
- Limit driving in wildlife areas at night.
- Keep up with regular auto maintenance.
- Think like an animal – be familiar with wildlife behavior.
- Keep a strong questioning attitude while driving to maintain situational awareness.

If you do collide with a deer, never approach the injured animal as they are powerful and can cause bodily harm to a human.

Health Tip of the Day

DON'T REWARD YOURSELF FOR CALORIES BURNED

People often overestimate the calories they burn with exercise and may then reward themselves by eating more. If you run for an hour and then treat yourself to a high-calorie coffee drink and a pastry, you probably consumed more calories than you burned with your run. If your goal is to lose a few pounds, be mindful of your food choices so you don't sabotage your efforts.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 13, 2015

Safety Focus

AGGRESSIVE DOGS

All pets possess some type of aggressive behavior... please be aware of the warning signs:

- Dominance aggression – dog snaps and growls when fingers get close to food bowl or toys.
- Territorial-based aggression – dog learns the yard, the car, or the house are his.
- Fear-based aggression – dog wants nothing to do with strange people or strange places.
- Prey or predatorial aggression – dog instinctively chases something that moves.

Health Tip of the Day

SUMMER FRUITS

Summer is a great time to enjoy seasonal fruits when they are at their peak. Consider a refreshing and tasty fruit salad made with blueberries, strawberries, grapes, cherries, melons and peaches. These are just a few of the many seasonal fruits you can enjoy in the summer months. For more ideas on ways to prepare summer fruits, visit: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org and click on “what’s in season?”

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 14, 2015

Safety Focus

POISON IVY, OAK, AND SUMAC FAST FACTS

Are the rashes contagious? Rubbing the rashes will not 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.

Can you catch poison ivy simply by being near the plants? Direct contact is needed to release urushiol oil. If your clothes have encountered these plants, do not wear again nor wash with clothes that have not been in contact with these plants.

Subjected to poison plants: The urushiol may be deposited on the skin by direct contact with plant or by contact with contaminated objects, such as clothing, shoes, tools and animals.

Preventive Measures: Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, tucked into boots. Wear leather gloves. Apply barrier creams to exposed skin. (Tecnu)

Exposure: If you have been exposed to any of these poisonous plants, use “Zanfel” which can be purchased from your local Walmart, Rite Aid or Walgreen’s. Entergy has approved the product. If you have rubbing alcohol available, apply to exposed area. It removes the oily resin up to 30 minutes after exposure.

Leaves of three let them be: Poison sumac has seven to 13 leaves on a branch, although poison ivy and oak have three leaves per cluster.

Health Tip of the Day

KID’S SUN SAFETY

Did you know that just a few serious sunburns can increase your child's risk of skin cancer later in life? Kids don't have to be at the pool, beach or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protection from the sun's harmful UV rays whenever they're outdoors. Most of us know how important it is to rub on sunscreen with UVA/UVB protection. But, there are additional ways to protect your child’s skin: keep them in the shade when the UV rays are strongest (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), cover them up with protective clothing and have them wear a hat.

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Today is ...

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 15, 2015

Safety Focus

SPIDER: BLACK WIDOW

Black Widow Spider *Latrodectus* occasionally arrive in shipments of household goods. The black widow spider has potent neurotoxic venom and is considered the most venomous spider in North America. However, the female injects such a small dose of venom that it rarely causes death. Reports indicate human mortality at well less than 1 percent from black widow spider bites.

Identification: The adult female black widow spider has a shiny, jet black, spherical abdomen with two connected red triangles on the underside that form a characteristic hourglass marking. Note, however, that the hourglass color may range from yellowish to various shades of orange or red. Adult females are about 1/2-inch long, not including the legs (about 1-1/2 inches when legs are spread). Adult males are harmless, about half the female's size, with smaller bodies and longer legs. The male's abdomen usually has red spots along the upper midline and white lines or bars radiating out to the sides. Newly hatched spiderlings are predominantly white or yellowish-white, gradually acquiring more black and varying amounts of red and white with each molt. Juveniles of both sexes resemble the male and are harmless.

Health Tip of the Day

STAYING ACTIVE AT ANY SIZE

Would you like to be more physically active, but are unsure if you can do it because of your size? Large, small or somewhere in between, physical activity can give you more energy, lower your stress and help you feel better about yourself. If you feel self-conscious about exercising, try doing something in the comfort of your home, like gardening or dancing to music, or consider a walking group with friends that you are comfortable with. It is always a good idea to talk with your health care provider before starting any physical activity.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 16, 2015

Safety Focus

SPIDER: BROWN RECLUSE

The name "brown recluse" describes the color and the habits of this increasingly infamous spider. Brown recluse spiders, *Loxosceles reclusa* are one of the few spiders in the United States that are known to be very harmful to humans. It is regarded by some as more dangerous than the black widow spider because it is considered a house spider and isn't as simple to identify. Adult brown recluse spiders are yellowish-tan to dark brown. They have long, thin gray to dark brown legs covered with very short, dark hairs. Young brown recluse spiders are smaller and somewhat lighter in color. The most distinguishing mark on a brown recluse spider is the presence of a dark brown or black violin or fiddle on its back with the violin's "neck" pointing toward the rear of its body. For this reason, they are sometimes called "violin spiders" or "fiddleback spiders."

Spider Bite Symptoms of Brown Recluse

- Initial bite may go unnoticed.
- Burning, itching and redness are first symptoms and will occur hours or days after.
- Deep blue or purple ulcer or blister will follow.
- Other symptoms include fever and vomiting.
- A severe localized reaction can be expected including scabbing, slough off of tissue and slow healing.
- The effect is necrotic meaning death of tissue.

Health Tip of the Day

UNDERSTANDING PSORIASIS

According to the National Institute of Health, psoriasis is a long-lasting skin disease of scaling and inflammation. Treatment options depend on the severity of the condition, the type of psoriasis and how each person responds to the initial treatments. Things that can cause a person's psoriasis to worsen include infections, stress, changes in climate and certain medicines. For more information visit: <http://www.niams.nih.gov> and then click on "P" under the health information index.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 17, 2015

Safety Focus

INSECTS: WASPS/HORNETS

The social wasps and hornets (also known as yellow jackets in North America) comprise the family Vespidae and belong to the order of insects called Hymenoptera, which also includes bumblebees, honeybees, ants, sawflies and ichneumon-flies. The queens (or egg-laying females) are much larger than the workers, but both queens and workers have a poison sac and retractable sting at the tip of the abdomen. As everyone knows, they can inflict a very painful sting when disturbed and agitated! The bright yellow and black striping of wasps is a warning pattern to prospective predators, such as birds, that the insect is venomous and best left alone.

Health Tip of the Day

EXOTIC VEGGIES

Improve the variety of your diet – try some exotic produce. Nopales or cactus pads are often used in Mexican or Southwest dishes. Jicama (Mexican yam bean or Mexican potato) can be used raw in salads and tastes similar to a pear or apple. Chayote can be used like squash. Cassava is often boiled and can be used like a potato. Have fun experimenting with veggies you have never tried. Doing so may expand your food choices.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 18, 2015

Safety Focus

POISONOUS PLANTS: RECOGNITION & AVOIDANCE

Poison oak: The leaves of poison oak are similar to those of an actual oak tree. It has white/green flowers and berries. Poison oak grows as a shrub.

Poison ivy: The plant has shiny leaves, small yellow/green flowers and green/white berries. It grows as a vine, shrub or bush.

Poison sumac: The leaves of poison sumac grow in pairs; often seven to 13 pairs on a stem with a single leaflet on the top. Poison sumac produces yellow/green flowers and white/green berries. The non-poisonous variety produces red berries. Poison sumac grows as a shrub or tree.

Four Steps to Rash Prevention

Step 1: Always have available S.P.C. Barrier Cream.

Step 2: Include information on TAILBOARD HAZARD ASSESSMENT.

Step 3: Wash with Tecnu Extreme Scrub when contact has been made.

Step 4: Wash with Zanfel. After returning to office at the end of the day, wash skin again with Zanfel.

Always keep a strong questioning attitude while working around plants.

Health Tip of the Day

EXERCISE TO A BEAT

Research shows that listening to your favorite tunes while working out could help you go farther, faster, longer and with less discomfort. Most people have an instinct to match their movements and expressions to music – tap their feet, move their head, or dance – even if they suppress it. Music helps distract you from fatigue and can make the whole experience more pleasurable. As long as you don't distract yourself from being safe when exercising outside, music is a great way to “amp up” your workout!

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Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 19, 2015

Safety Focus

MOSQUITO-BORNE ENCEPHALITIS

Safety Tips

- Spray with insect repellent when outdoors.
- Stay indoors before dawn and after dusk.
- Take necessary precautions when working in wooded areas.
- Do a good Pre-Job Brief that includes mitigation of mosquitoes before starting an outdoor task.

Symptoms

- A sudden fever.
- A headache, light hurts the eyes.
- Vomiting.
- A stiff neck and back (occasionally).
- Confusion, disorientation, drowsiness.
- Clumsiness, unsteady gait.
- Irritability or poor temper control.

Emergency Symptoms

- Loss of consciousness.
- Poor responsiveness, stupor, coma.
- Seizures, sudden severe dementia.
- Muscle weakness or paralysis.

Health Tip of the Day

STICK WITH IT

Struggling with exercise adherence? Try these four tips. 1) Make it CONVENIENT. Choose an activity, time of day, and location that you can fit into your current schedule. 2) ESTABLISH A ROUTINE. Block out the time on your calendar for exercise and make it a habit. 3) MAKE EXERCISE A PRIORITY. Don't leave your workout time to chance. Find a way to fit it in first. 4) COMBINE FAMILY TIME WITH EXERCISE. Go for a walk, hike, or take a bike ride together.

D&I Focus

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Today is ...

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 20, 2015

Safety Focus

ATTACK OF THE KILLER BEES

Wear light colors, bees react to dark masses (bears attack hives). Bees are also known to be agitated by small staccato engines like lawn mowers and dirt bikes but they don't seem to be particularly aggravated by car or truck engines. Don't wear colognes or aftershaves if planning to be out doors; they attract the attention of bees. Use precautions when consuming Gatorade, fruit drinks and sweet soft drinks as that odor also attracts the attention of bees looking for food sources. Keep food and drinks sealed when outside. Pay attention to bees flying around. It may indicate the presence of a nearby hive. DON'T swat bees! When a bee realizes your cologne is not a flower it will lose interest and fly away. Why is it bad to swat bees? With common bees the pheromone released by crushing the bee will incite attack by the others up to 25 yards away. With Africanized bees the pheromone is effective up to 400 yards. DON'T swat bees! You will be inviting a swarm attack!

If you know you have high allergic reaction to bee stings now is the time to see your doctor for a prescription Epinephrine pin.

Health Tip of the Day

DINING OUT ON A BUDGET

Eating out doesn't have to be expensive. Try looking for coupons or weekly specials – check your newspaper, online, or join frequent diner programs offered by many eateries. Order water rather than a soda or cocktail. Also, consider splitting your meal in half and sharing it with a family member or saving the second half for the next day. For this latter option, you might want to ask your server to prepare it to-go ahead of time just to resist temptation. This will not only save you money but calories as well.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 21, 2015

Safety Focus

MY DOG DON'T BITE

Meter service employees are the best at recognizing aggressive dogs. Just think how many times in a day they encounter dogs and other hazardous animals and customers.

Before entering any customer's yard, you must first have a questioning attitude by looking for hazards that are waiting for you. Not just the dogs, but hazards that are in your walking path and yes, even the customer. Rattling a gate, hollering out for "ole Fido" may not be enough. Are you ready, do you have a game plan to stand your ground or run like heck? You will be the best judge of the situation, but you must be ready and have your guard up.

When entering a yard, just because a dog is tied up doesn't mean that it is safe to enter. Even chains sometimes don't stop aggressive dogs. Some of the larger breeds can and have broken chains to get to humans. Don't trust the chains.

If you feel that your safety is compromised because of aggressive dogs, contact the customer to allow them to bring the animal into the house, or even call the police to come and assist you as you complete your work; or skip the order. Note the reason why and return when the customer is home and can put up the dogs. "No work is so important or urgent ..." Can you finish the statement?

Health Tip of the Day

POSITIVE IMAGERY FOR ATHLETIC SUCCESS

What are you thinking about before shooting a basketball or putting a golf ball? Research suggests a good way to improve success in these athletic tasks is through positive imagery. Instead of thinking, "don't miss," visualize success. Imagine yourself performing perfectly and confidently while incorporating all your senses (see, feel, hear, smell and taste). Positive visualization is a skill and takes practice in order to be perfected.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 22, 2015

Safety Focus

RISING WATER

Hurricanes bring several inches of rain into our area with a strong possibility of widespread flooding. Employees need to remember several critical factors when working around floodwater and after the water has receded.

1. Do not drive or walk into any water unless you positively know that the depth of the water is at a safe level.
2. Be aware that manholes may have been displaced by the rising water. Use a probe to feel in front of you if you have to walk in water and cannot clearly see the ground.
3. Be aware of insects and animals that have been misplaced by the floodwaters.
 - a. Snakes, spiders and ants will move to higher ground such as: trash and debris piles, areas under houses, trees, bushes, etc.
 - b. Dogs may not be in their normal environment or properly secured and may be more aggressive than usual.
4. Use your insect repellent and carry your dog spray, but most importantly stay aware of your surroundings at all times.
5. Watch for, and stay away from, downed power lines. Treat all downed lines as energized.
6. Employees working over or near water, where the chance of drowning exists, **shall** wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device.
7. Don't think it is Safe ... Know it is Safe!
8. Use S.T.A.R. (Stop, Think, Act, Review) and other Human Performance tools while working around rising waters.

Health Tip of the Day

BENEFITS OF QUITTING SMOKING

According to the National Cancer Institute, the health benefits of quitting smoking begin quickly. Within hours, carbon monoxide levels in the blood begin to drop. Heart rate and blood pressure begin to return to normal. After a few days, smell and taste senses improve. After just a few months, lung function and breathing get better and the risk of chronic health problems such as cancer and heart disease begins to fall. To learn more about quitting smoking, visit www.smokefree.gov.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.



Today is ...

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 23, 2015

Safety Focus

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, resinlike 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.

Health Tip of the Day

THINK TWICE ABOUT TACO SALADS

Don't let the word "salad" mislead you when dining out. According to our registered dietitian, some taco salads contain more calories and fat compared with other menu items because the meat, cheese, sour cream and fried shell can quickly add up. For a lower-calorie option, skip the fried shell, ask for grilled chicken breast instead of taco meat, and ask for the sour cream on the side. Request extra salsa to add more veggies and flavor to your meal.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

Hazard Recognition: Animals/Insects/Poisonous Plants

September 24, 2015

Safety Focus

RODENTS AND WILD OR STRAY ANIMALS

Dead and live animals can spread diseases such as rat bite fever and rabies. Avoid contact with wild or stray animals. Avoid contact with rats or rat-contaminated buildings. If you can't avoid contact, use your human performance tools, wear protective gloves and wash your hands regularly.

Get rid of dead animals as soon as possible. If bitten/scratched, get medical attention immediately.

Health Tip of the Day

HOW'S YOUR BALANCE?

Good balance is important, especially as we get older. It can help improve coordination and athletic skill, as well as reduce the risk of injuries from falls by increasing stability. Simple exercises may help you improve your balance. One example is standing on one foot, holding the position for up to 10 seconds, and repeating several times on each leg. Hold onto a sturdy chair to help you remain steady as you get started. Combining lower-body strengthening exercises with balance activities is also beneficial. If your legs or core muscles are weak or your balance is very poor, ask a fitness professional for help in getting started.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 25, 2015

Safety Focus

INSECTS – STINGS & BITES

Avoid walking barefoot in the grass (honeybees and bumblebees forage on white clover, a weed that grows in lawns throughout the US). Insect repellents DO NOT work against stinging insects. Never swat or flail at a flying insect. If need be, gently brush it aside or patiently wait for it to leave. DO NOT drink from open beverage cans. Stinging insects will crawl inside a can attracted by the sweet beverage. When eating outdoors, try to keep food covered at all times. Stinging insects are fond of the same foods you are. Garbage cans stored outside should be covered with tight-fitting lids. Avoid wearing sweet-smelling perfumes, hairsprays, colognes, and deodorants. Avoid wearing bright colored clothing with flowery patterns. Bees may mistake you for a flower. If you have had an allergic reaction to an insect sting, it is important that you see an allergist. You have a 60 percent chance of having a similar or worse reaction if stung again.

Health Tip of the Day

FIND A LOCAL FARMERS MARKET

Farmers markets are a great place to purchase fresh, local produce, especially during this time of the year when so many fresh fruits and vegetables are in season. Many farmers markets also carry other locally produced foods such as meats and eggs. To find a farmers market in your area, visit <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 26, 2015

Safety Focus

FIRE ANTS

Fire Ants, *Solenopsis invicta*, are serious pests. They inflict a painful sting and if not eradicated will seriously affect our lifestyle.

Identification:

Are small, coppery-brown in color on the head and body, with a darker abdomen. They come in a variety of sizes within one nest, ranging from 2mm to 6 mm, and can be distinguished by their aggressive behavior, particularly near the nest. Their nests can appear as dome-shaped mounds, up to 40cm high, or can be found next to, or underneath other objects found on the ground, such as timber, logs, rocks, pavers, bricks, etc. Mounds will not always be evident, but are usually found in open areas such as lawns, pastures, along roadsides and unused cropland.

Health Tip of the Day

HIRING A PERSONAL TRAINER

Working with the right personal trainer can really help you reach your goals. Our fitness experts recommend you consider these important criteria when hiring a personal trainer: Is he or she certified by a reputable organization such as the American College of Sports Medicine, American Council on Exercise or National Strength and Conditioning Association? Do they have an academic background in health or exercise science? Have you heard positive comments from other clients? Are their fees reasonable? Can they work with your schedule? Does their personality fit with your needs?

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 27, 2015

Safety Focus

POISON SUMAC

Poison sumac is a woody shrub growing from five to twenty-five feet. The leaves are divided into seven to 13 leaflets that grow in pairs and have a single leaflet at the end of the node. Poison sumac usually starts as itching and small blisters within a few hours after exposure within three minutes of exposure. Severe cases will require medical attention. Keep a strong questioning attitude while working around poison sumac.

Health Tip of the Day

SUNGLASSES FOR KIDS

Experts recommend that everyone, including children, protect their eyes from the sun. Sunglasses with ultraviolet protection can help filter out damaging rays. Shop for sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B rays and that fit children's active lifestyles. Think function instead of fashion when buying sunglasses. Look at the amount of UV protection, lens quality and durability to ensure that you buy the right sunglasses for your child.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 28, 2015

Safety Focus

SNAKES

Always watch where you place your hands and feet when removing debris. If possible, don't place your fingers under debris you are moving. Wear heavy gloves. If you see a snake, step back and allow it to proceed. Wear boots at least 10 inches high. Watch for snakes sunning on fallen trees, limbs or other debris.

A snake's striking distance is about half the total length of the snake. If bitten, note the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment. Keep bite victims still and calm to slow the spread of venom in case the snake is poisonous. Seek medical attention as soon as possible. Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom. Apply first aid: lay the person down so that the bite is below the level of the heart, and cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

Health Tip of the Day

COOKING WITH FRESH HERBS

Fresh herbs are a delicious way to add flavor to meals. Many of them can be grown in a garden or even a small pot or planter indoors. You may also be able to purchase fresh herbs in the produce department of your local grocery store. Enjoy fresh basil and oregano in Italian dishes, cilantro in salsa and tacos, and rosemary in chicken and potato dishes. If you are new to cooking with fresh herbs, try a new recipe or two to help discover your family favorites!

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 29, 2015

Safety Focus

WEST NILE VIRUS

West Nile virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mild symptoms include fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms of severe infection include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis.

You can protect yourself from mosquito bites in these ways:

- Apply picaridin or insect repellent with DEET to exposed skin.
- Spray clothing with repellents containing DEET or permethrin. (Note: Do not spray permethrin directly onto exposed skin.)
- Wear long sleeves, long pants and socks.
- Be extra vigilant at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Get rid of sources of standing water (used tires, buckets) to reduce or eliminate mosquito breeding areas.
- Use all your Human Performance tools like Pre-Job Brief to mitigate the potential of West Nile.

Health Tip of the Day

ENGAGING YOUR CORE

When you are sitting at your desk, try taking a moment to practice engaging your core muscles. Doing so can improve your posture and help prevent low-back pain. Sit up tall; place one hand on your belly and the other in the small of your back. Bring your hands closer together through compressing your abdominal wall. Next, move your hands to the sides of your natural waist. While breathing normally, draw them toward one another without pressing, narrowing your waist.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...

September 30, 2015

Safety Focus

POISON OAK

A big problem with getting poison oak is identifying the plant. If you can't spot poison oak a mile away, your only recourse is to *never touch any vegetation at all* while hiking or doing whatever you're doing. You can recognize poison oak by its classic three-leaf pattern. Unfortunately, there are other plants with triple-leaf patterns too. You cannot depend on the color. In some areas, the leaves remain green the entire time they are on the stem. In other areas the leaves are red in the spring. Growth ranges from sea level to 5,000 feet altitude in various forms, such as spindly plants, bushes or climbing vines.

Health Tip of the Day

HEALTHY DINING FINDER

Eating out is one of America's favorite pastimes. But, if you're not careful, the calories can add up quickly. Healthydiningfinder.com is a free online resource where consumers can easily search for their favorite restaurants to find healthier choices when eating out. The website includes nutrition information for select dietitian-approved healthy menu options served at thousands of restaurant locations, including fast-food and upscale restaurants.

D&I Focus

Diversity & Inclusion information not available at the time of posting.

Today is ...