



Lead Story

Aspirin and cancer

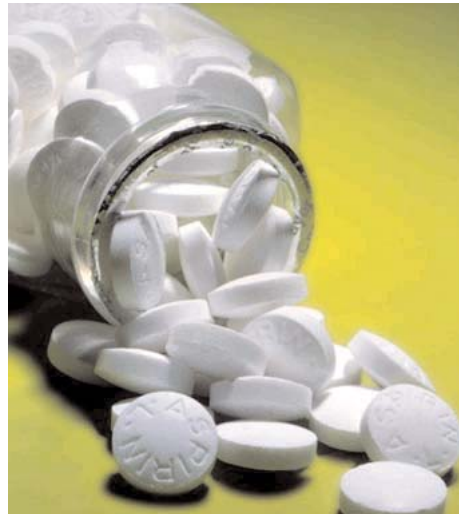
■ Do benefits of taking an aspirin per day outweigh the risks?

When looking for new weapons in the war on cancer, how about taking a look at the age-old remedy in your own medicine cabinet?

Scientific evidence confirms that daily use of aspirin may lower the risk of dying from certain cancers. Research at Oxford University in the UK and other centres found that a small daily dose of aspirin - 75 mg - cuts overall cancer deaths by at least one fifth. The study covered close to 25,000 patients, mostly from the UK.

Aspirin is already known to cut the risk of heart attack and stroke among those at increased risk. On the other hand, the protective effects against cardiovascular disease are thought to be small for healthy adults, and aspirin increases the risk of stomach bleeds. But some experts, such as lead researcher Professor Peter Rothwell are advising the importance of weighing up the risks and benefits of taking aspirin.

“The treatment with aspirin lasted for between four and eight years, but long term follow-up of around 12,500 patients showed the protective effect continued for 20 years in both men and women,” said Rothwell. “The risk of cancer death was reduced by 20 per cent over 20 years. For individual cancers, the reduction was about 40 per cent for bowel cancer, 30 per cent for lung



cancer, 10 per cent for prostate cancer and 60 per cent for cancer of the oesophagus.”

There was not enough data to show an effect on breast or ovarian cancer and the authors suggest this is because there were not enough women in the trials. Large-scale studies investigating the effects on these cancers are underway.

According to Rothwell, the annual risk of major internal bleeding was about one in 1,000 and aspirin roughly doubles that risk. But he said danger of major bleeding was very low in middle age but increased dramatically after 75. He says a sensible time to consider starting daily aspirin use would be between 45 to 50 and continuing for around 25 years.

“Aspirin should be thought of in the same context as lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise which can help to preserve health,” stated Professor Rothwell.

Please turn to page 3

Inside this month's issue of Comfort Zone:

(Click on the page numbers to go directly to the section)

Making Headlines

Pages 2-3

- Walking banishes winter blues
- How heart-healthy are you?
- Creative remedies for ailments
- mobile units fight vision loss

Tips For Supervisors

Pages 4-5

- Fight post holiday blues
- Shine light on hazards
- Balance life and work
- Family dinners start new year

Safety Round up

Page 6

- Holistic approach to injury
- Cold prevention - fact or fiction?
- Holistic approach to severe injury

Health and Safety Minute

Pages 7-8

- Thyroid disease a family affair
- CO the silent killer
- Flu season peaks in January
- Winter exercise
- Tips to keep food fresh
- Electronic health records

Safety Meeting

Pages 9-11

This month:

Avoid winter slips and trips

M a k i n g H e a d l i n e s

Walking helps banish the winter blues

(NC)-Are the short days of winter bringing you down in the dumps? If you answered yes, this is all the more reason you need to get up and move your body. A study found that just one bout of exercise -- a brisk 30-minute walk -- immediately buoyed mood in depressed individuals.

For people with arthritis, walking puts less stress on your joints and is considered to be much better and safer than running. Walking allows you to stretch your back and leg muscles and joints that can become stiff from sitting. The Arthritis Society offers the following tips:

■ **Avoid over-bundling.** You should still feel a little cool when leaving the house. If you're too warmly bundled, you'll sweat profusely once you get moving, increasing the odds of feeling chilled.



■ **Layer up.** Several layers of clothing (and yes, socks!) insulate better than the thickest coat, and you can remove items when you get too hot. The inner-most layers should be material that wicks wetness away from skin, such as silk or synthetic fabric but not cotton. The outer-most layer should be wind and waterproof.

■ **Choose fitted garments.** A

turtleneck prevents cold air from getting sucked down your shirt; baggy clothing does the opposite!

■ **Cover your mouth.** Dry winter air can trigger coughing and wheezing. A balaclava or scarf over your nose and mouth helps keep in moisture, making it easier to breathe in the cold air.

■ **Envelop your extremities.** Don't forget a warm hat, mitts, and toasty boots with a deep tread.

■ **Keep moving.** It's the only way to stay warm.

■ **Heed burning, tingling.** Both of these sensations are warning signs of frostbite. If you start to experience them, warm the area against your body (for example, tuck freezing fingers under your arms) and find shelter ASAP.

To learn more about managing arthritis, visit www.arthritis.ca.

How heart-healthy are you? Learn about the new cholesterol targets

(NC)-The landscape of heart health has changed, and what you don't know might hurt you. The recently updated Canadian cholesterol guidelines state that regardless of your level of cardiovascular risk, you may need to lower your level of low density lipoprotein (LDL-C) or "bad" cholesterol by 50 per cent.

Does that sound like a daunting task? Here are a number of suggestions to help.

Talk to your doctor. Your physician has access to the latest heart health information and can access your level of risk to determine what targets are appropriate for you.

Healthy eating can make a difference in how you look and feel. In fact, for people living with high cholesterol, eating the right foods may be able to help you reach your cholesterol targets. How to start? Consider:

■ Choosing a variety of healthy foods including vegetables and fruits, grains, dairy, and meat and alternatives

■ Starting your day with a nutritious breakfast

■ Watching your portion sizes

■ Drinking lots of water to keep yourself well hydrated

■ Eating smaller meals more frequently throughout the day

■ Limiting your salt, alcohol and caffeine intake

Exercise plays an important role in helping improve your cholesterol levels. 30 - 60 minutes of daily exercise may seem overwhelming, but it might not be as hard as you think. Consider integrating these simple activities into your daily routine:

■ Stand or walk around your house while talking on the telephone

■ Get off the bus a few blocks early

and walk the rest of the way to your destination

■ Take the stairs at work instead of the elevator

■ Use your lunch hour to take a walk around the block

■ Put light weights on your ankles while cleaning the house

■ Use a pedometer to monitor how many steps you take

■ Get active while watching television! Join a sports league

■ Park as far away as possible and walk to the entrance of the grocery store, bank, mall, etc.

And finally, focus on the positive. Don't defeat yourself with a "go big or go home" attitude.

Set realistic and achievable goals. Focus on the things that you can control and give yourself a reasonable time frame to achieve your goal.

The information presented in Comfort Zone has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable. However, it cannot be assumed that all acceptable measures are contained in this article nor that additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional circumstances, or your own company procedures, or by federal, state/provincial and local law. Local, state/provincial and federal regulations take precedence over this material. We reserve the

right to make periodic changes, additions, and deletions to these publications, and the products and programs described in these publications without notice.

Comfort Zone is published monthly by Skilven Publications Ltd. www.skilven.com. All rights reserved. © 2010. No part of this publication is to be copied without permission from the publisher with exception to the safety meeting contained herein.

President & CEO: Chris Skilton

Sales: Art Hamilton • Alan Haycroft •

Lisa Garoway • Liz Slobodin •

Carol Wilkinson

Editor: Kate Peeren

Contributing Writer: Bryden Winsby

TOLL FREE: 1-888-655-4800 • **Fax:** 1-250-487-2104

Mailing Address: 101-196 Wade Ave W

Penticton, British Columbia V2A 1T6

www.skilven.com • customerservice@skilven.com

M a k i n g H e a d l i n e s

Aspirin and cancer

Continued from page 1

However, the B.C. Cancer Agency states the study doesn't show the long-term effects of aspirin use and that it's too early to start changing recommendations on aspirin. A U.S. health task force specifically recommends against aspirin for people with an average cancer risk.

Although there are two sides to this study, all experts agree that anyone considering taking aspirin on a regular basis should first talk to their health care professional.

It is also important to remember that people should not think of aspirin as a guarantee against cancer.

Other preventative strategies are just as important to observe such as:

- Not smoking. Cigarettes, cigars, pipes and even smokeless tobacco cause cancer. If you already smoke, you should try to quit.

- Maintaining a healthy weight by eating a variety of healthful foods.

- Balancing calorie intake with physical activity.

- Limiting consumption if you drink alcoholic beverages.

- Avoiding pesticides and products and have cancer causing ingredients.

- Adopting an active lifestyle. Engage in some kind of physical activity for 30 minutes every day.

First Nations benefiting from mobile ophthalmology clinics

(NC)-Diabetes is one of the leading causes of blindness. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to preventing tragic vision loss. On Vancouver Island, the Inter Tribal Health Authority's teleophthalmology mobile clinics, launched in April 2010, are helping physicians diagnose and treat vision problems associated with diabetes in rural and remote First Nations communities.

Mobile retinal screening clinics have been set up to serve the 51 First Nations communities on the island. These clinics have a team of two First Nations technicians and a registered nurse who travel to the communities to conduct retinal scans of all residents who suffer from diabetes. The scans are downloaded to a server and then sent to Victoria-based retinal specialists for assessment. Dr. Glen Hoar is one of those specialists.

"This program has provided a

significant improvement in our ability to provide retinal screening to patients in remote communities who might otherwise not have the ability to access care. Our preliminary results have been very encouraging," says Dr. Hoar.

The remoteness of many First Nations communities makes treating diabetes very difficult, which means that people have been suffering vision loss that would have been preventable with early treatment. Shelley Ellis is one of the nurses on the teleophthalmology project working to reverse that trend.

"We are saving the vision of people who might well otherwise go blind," says Ellis. "We're doing things with this project and this technology that we could never have done 15 years ago. I believe it's the future of health care."

You can learn more about electronic health solutions online at www.knowingisbetter.ca

Creative remedies for winter ailments

(NC)-Data today suggests that as many as 80 per cent of doctor visits are for mild, inconvenient disorders.

These consultations put a constant strain on public resources, especially when you add the costs for unnecessary medical tests.

Running off to the doctor is not needed for every seasonal ailment and indeed, health specialists are the first to say that many of winter's discomforts can be alleviated with a few tips and tricks at home, like these:

Dry Skin: When you are still wet from a shower, lock in the moisture with a rich body cream or with any product containing petroleum. Instead of rubbing, pat yourself dry to avoid removing your skin's natural oils, then apply a thin layer to the affected area.

Hoarse Voice: Steaming hot water is effective for moisturizing virus-infected vocal cords. If you don't have a humidifier, boil the water yourself and breathe in under a towel. Steam is dangerously hot, so caution is advised.

Virus Defence: Health specialists remind us to keep vigilant with a healthy diet and sufficient sleep-and to scrub our hands regularly. Other proven measures include aerobic exercise, meditation and staying well hydrated.

Arthritic Pain: Hot peppers, like jalapenos, are getting thumbs up for giving relief to the joints. When cream containing capsaicin, from peppers, is rubbed on the painful spot, it stops the destruction of cartilage, relieves pain, and increases flexibility. Some brand-name rubs now contain capsaicin.

Fight the post-holiday blues and start the New Year off right

(NC)-With the festive season coming to an end, you may find yourself feeling a touch of the post-holiday blues making it all that much more difficult to keep your New Year's resolutions. The following simple steps can help you start the New Year off on a positive note and stay motivated to reach your resolution goals in 2011.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Eating a balanced diet and maintaining an active lifestyle is key to feeling your best. Better still, it can contribute to helping you get back on track in managing your weight following those tasty holiday indulgences. Try kick-starting the New Year incorporating regular physical activity along with low fat foods cereals and bars into your daily routine. Making physical activity part of your day-to-day and eating healthy foods can help make all the difference in your overall health and in achieving your weight management goals.

Treat yourself. If you look good you will feel good, and feeling good could be just what you need to keep motivated to lose those extra pounds or kick that bad habit you've wanted to get rid of for years. Simple things like getting a new hair cut can help refresh the soul and keep spirits up.

Strut your stuff. Confidence is key and speaks volumes about you as a person. Now that you have taken control of your diet and exercise routine and treated yourself, it's time to strut your stuff and make heads turn with the new fabulous you.

Super Vision

Shine a light on hidden hazards

BY BRYDEN WINSBY
FOR COMFORT ZONE

What you don't know can't hurt you, the old saying goes. After all, if you do not know about a problem or unpleasant situation, you will not be made unhappy by worrying about it.

Well, that expression certainly is inappropriate for workplace health and safety. In fact, the opposite is true. The more you know about hazards or potential hazards, the better.

Awareness and recognition are two words you will hear frequently with regard to minimizing the risk of injury or illness. Every factory, shop and office has health and safety hazards that often go unnoticed and unattended. Some are hidden; others can be seen but do not seem to pose much of a threat. Danger can exist in both instances, and might affect all workers or just a few.

While an organization and its supervisors have a responsibility to protect all employees all the time and to minimize or eliminate any preventable loss of time on the job, everyone should be on constant lookout for hazards - and know what to do when they spot them.

Employees should be given training on how to recognize and report hazards - and be confident that their concerns will be dealt with promptly, provided they are not frivolous or mischievous.

From a supervisory standpoint, you certainly can't fix a problem until you know about it. A good place to start is with an effective inspection program (which most jurisdictions require anyway). The extent of such a program depends on the type of work area involved. Very hazardous areas might require formal, weekly inspections, while office areas might need only a monthly inspection.

Hazards are many and varied - from faulty or inadequately guarded machinery and poor housekeeping to chemicals and biological organisms; from ergonomic issues to noise, vibration, heat, light and the weather.

Inspections should include areas where no work is done regularly, such as parking lots and storage areas.

CHECK YOURSELF:

Inspections not only can identify existing and potential hazards, underlying causes and corrective actions, they also can:

- Provide a better understanding of jobs and tasks.
- Determine safety training needs.
- Indicate whether safety and health policies and procedures are being followed.
- Show employees that there is genuine concern for their safety and health.

As with anything worth doing, proper inspections require careful preparation, planning and training.

Checklists should be used for every inspection. Excellent examples can be obtained from safety and health organizations and workers' compensation agencies.

The inspection can be rendered meaningless, of course, unless there is follow-up to make sure that corrective measures have been implemented, and that changed or new procedures are being followed.

If everyone is involved in exposing hazards, hidden or not, everyone wins.

Since workers are expected to be vigilant at all times, it is only reasonable to involve them directly in the inspection process, whether that means helping conduct the inspection itself (a great training tool) or developing checklists for their particular work areas.

They certainly should be encouraged to discuss safety problems - at any time, but especially during an inspection or when its report (even in summary form) is presented at a safety meeting.

Remember, though, that hazard recognition and reporting is a never-ending process, not something that is top-of-mind only when inspections are being planned or undertaken.

S u p e r V i s i o n

The life-work balancing act

BY BRYDEN WINSBY
FOR COMFORT ZONE

Many of us devote a lot more of ourselves than we should to our jobs, both mentally and physically.

Time that otherwise could be spent relaxing or enjoying leisure pursuits is gobbled up by tasks related to how we earn a living.

While some people are quite happy with this imbalance, a great many others are not. It can have serious negative effects on one's health and personal relationships.

A recent study found that nearly one-third of Canadians between the ages of 19 and 64 considered themselves to be "workaholics" - spending 50 or more hours a week (sometimes a lot more) on the job.

Among other things, the study found they did not enjoy their jobs more than other workers. Both groups reported a similar rate of satisfaction.

Similarly, there was no difference in satisfaction with their financial situation, suggesting that people who consider themselves workaholics are driven by reasons other than the need to earn more income.

Research elsewhere has come up with similar results.

It is one thing to recognize a problem, however, and quite another to do something about it. While one cannot control all the factors that affect work-life balance, there are things that can be controlled.

Striking a meaningful balance has a lot to do with time management, but not entirely. Here are some ways to get started:

Analyze - Whether you're seeking a promotion or trying to cope with increasing demands of the job, it's important to have a clear understanding of your relationship to work - why you do what you do - and the effect it can have on what otherwise would be personal or "spare" time.

Prioritize - Using your time more efficiently, on or off the job, means deciding what is important and what can wait. Establish a realistic schedule for getting the essential things done. Learn when to say no - to yourself and to others.

Organize - More than time is involved with making a schedule work. You might need to improve the mechanics of your workflow, eliminate clutter and other sources of confusion, and minimize distraction.

There are other things you can do to improve your work-life balance. If the demands of your job are onerous, seek support from your boss to lighten the load. Ask about flex hours, a compressed workweek, job sharing, telecommuting or other scheduling flexibility.

It is important to leave work at work. With the technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually anywhere, there may be no boundary between work and home. Create one by making a conscious decision to separate

CHECK YOURSELF:

Striking a meaningful balance has a lot to do with time management, but not entirely. Here are some ways to get started:

Analyze - It's important to have a clear understanding of your relationship to work.

Prioritize - Use your time more efficiently, on or off the job.

Organize - Improve the mechanics of your workflow, eliminate clutter and other sources of confusion, and minimize distraction.

work time from personal time.

Nurture yourself. Eat healthy foods, include physical activity in your daily routine, take frequent breaks at work, and get enough sleep. Set aside time each day for an activity that you enjoy just by yourself, or that you can do with your partner, family or friends.

Don't leave all household chores for the weekend - and if you've got vacation time coming, take every bit of it.

There is no one-size-fits-all formula for putting your life in balance. Everyone needs help from time to time. If your life feels too chaotic to manage and you're constantly worrying about it, consider talking with a counsellor or other health care professional.

Family dinners start the New Year off healthy

A study in the March 2010 issue of the journal *Pediatrics* found that kids who ate dinner with their families were less likely to be obese. Great news to hear at a time of year that's jam-packed with family gatherings.

According to the study's authors, Dr. Sarah Anderson and Dr. Robert Whitaker, U.S. preschool aged children who obtained adequate sleep, spent limited time in front of the computer or

TV, and regularly ate dinner as a family, had a 40 per cent lower incidence of obesity than children who did not. And it's easy to understand why.

Not only does less screen time allow for more active time (which leads to better sleep), but other studies have shown that quality time with the family may help children make more responsible decisions about food and exercise.

So make it your family's New Year's resolution to eat together every night, not just on holidays.

At My Best, a national school-based wellness program developed by AstraZeneca Canada and Physical and Health Education Canada, can help make all of your family meal times healthy and delicious.

You can find year-round, kid friendly recipes online at www.atmybest.ca.

HEALTH & SAFETY ROUNDUP

WorkSafeBC provides a holistic approach to severely injured workers

Richmond, B.C. — Last year, WorkSafeBC enhanced its Special Care Services team to provide more holistic services to severely injured workers. Workers who suffer lifelong and life-altering injuries, including spinal cord injuries, catastrophic burns, amputations, and brain injuries, often don't return to their old jobs or their regular day-to-day life.

"They're the most serious cases and they don't always have tidy, happy endings," said Jennifer Leyen, WorkSafeBC Special Care Services Director. "Individuals may suffer from anger and even depression and it's our job to provide ongoing compassionate assistance to ease their burdens."

As understanding of the complexities of living with a serious injury has increased, WorkSafeBC has enhanced its services and support by adding to its team of medical specialists, case managers, psychologists, and social workers. Special Care Services continues to enhance its ongoing training for staff who work with specific injuries.

One result of this holistic approach was a photo essay by injured worker Simon Paradis, whose experience inspired him to depict his grueling morning routine in a poignant photo essay entitled *Simon's Legs* (1 min 31 sec). Two years ago, while working as a finishing carpenter, Paradis fell three metres from a scaffold and suffered a devastating spinal cord injury that left him unable to walk, and with brain injuries that forced him to relearn the most basic motor skills. Visit www.worksafebc.com for more information.

Cold prevention-fact or fiction?

(NC)-Modern medicine hasn't found a cure for the common cold, but that doesn't stop the rest of us from trying. Avoiding getting sick in the first place is better still, and everyone has their own secret remedy. Here are some of the most common remedies, and the scientific consensus on how well they work.

Omega-3

Consensus: credible

The fatty acids of a daily omega-3 supplement deliver immune-fortifying properties, according to the Institute of Human Nutrition and School of Medicine in Britain. Omega-3 increases the activity of phagocytes, the cells that eat up bacteria. Additional research also shows that omega-3 increases airflow and protects the lungs from infections. Capsules should contain at least 1 gram of EPA and DHA fish oil to be effective.

Cold-Fx

Consensus: credible

In a clinical trial published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, participants who took two daily capsules of Cold-FX caught 25 per cent fewer respiratory infections as a group taking a placebo. When participants did get sick, their symptoms were 31 per cent less severe and they were sick for 1/3 less time. This particular ginseng extract contains compounds that increase disease-fighting white blood cells and interleukins, important proteins for the immune system.

Echinacea

Consensus: hype

While this herb has the potential to shorten the duration and severity of symptoms, the quality of the extract can vary. Be sure to read the labels so you know what you are taking. Side effects have included wheezing, rash, and diarrhea.

Vitamin D

Consensus: credible

A recent Harvard study showed that people with the lowest vitamin D levels were 36 per cent more likely to catch upper respiratory infections. An optimum level of the vitamin will produce cathelicidin, a protein with virus-killing qualities. A growing number of studies suggest an intake of at least 1,000 IU every



day, which is most easily achieved with a dietary supplement.

Vitamin C

Consensus: hype

A diet rich in vitamin C is essential to good health, but loading up on supplements for extra protection isn't recommended. A 2007 review of 30 studies found no evidence that vitamin C supplementation prevents colds in the general population. Megadoses have also been shown to cause kidney stones, upset stomach, and even internal bleeding in children.

Zinc

Consensus: conflicting

Research continues, but results are underwhelming. Zinc is credited with slowing the spread of germs in the nose and throat. Some reports show that taking a 30-mg zinc supplement at the very start of a cold will shorten it by about half a day. On the other hand, more than 50-mg per day can suppress your immune system and block the absorption of other essential minerals.

Many Canadians are unable to correctly identify if they have flu or a cold. Typical symptoms of flu include: fever, headaches, malaise, loss of appetite as well as muscle aches and pains. A cold is a mild infection of the upper respiratory passages caused by a variety of viruses. It may last for a week and symptoms include a runny nose, stuffy nose, cough and sore throat. A cold is caused by a rhinovirus, which is much different from an influenza virus. Symptoms such as headache, fever, muscle aches, and nausea do not usually accompany a cold.

Thyroid disease may be a family affair

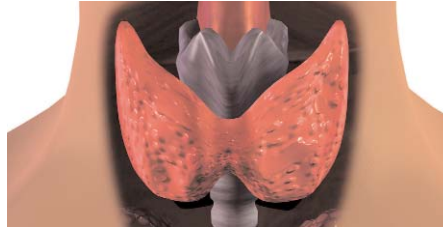
(NC)-If a member of your family has been diagnosed with hypothyroidism (under-active thyroid gland), chances are one in three that at least one other blood relative may have the disease, according to a recent survey of Canadian adults who had been diagnosed with hypothyroidism.

Although menopause and aging are risk factors, hypothyroidism may develop at almost any age. Three out of four survey respondents said they were diagnosed before age 55, including one in 14 diagnosed before age 18.

Asked what led them to consult the physician who diagnosed hypothyroidism, only one in 10 respondents said it was because the disease ran in their family.

Fatigue was the reason most often given (54%). One in three said weight gain, while one in five consulted their doctor because of depression, mood swings, and sensitivity to cold - all common signs and symptoms of an under-active thyroid. A routine physical check-up brought the disease to light in 18% of cases.

Butterfly-shaped and located just below the Adam's apple, the thyroid gland produces the hormones that regulate



growth, maturation and speed of metabolism.

The American Thyroid Association recommends that all adults be screened for thyroid disorders beginning at age 35 years and every 5 years thereafter. This is done with a simple blood test, the thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) test. Under-active thyroid usually is treated with a thyroid hormone replacement to return hormone levels to normal.

Untreated thyroid disorders may lead to long-term health complications such as heart disease, osteoporosis, infertility, muscle weakness, and clinical depression. In pregnant women, it may increase the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, learning disabilities and other developmental problems in children.

For more information, visit www.thyroid.ca and www.whatswrongwithme.ca.

Flu season peaks in the New Year

(NC)-All the excitement about avoiding getting sick usually starts around Thanksgiving and fades by the New Year. Maybe the reason the flu season peaks after the holidays is that everyone lets their guard down.

Stay vigilant with these tips to stay healthy all the way until the snow melts.

■ **Get your flu shot:** If you think it's too late, think again. Flu season can last all the way into May, so it's still a good idea to get vaccinated if you didn't roll up your sleeve in the fall.

■ **Wash your hands:** More often than you think you need to, and for longer,

too. Just a reminder-'nough said.

■ **Clean and disinfect:** Think about all the things you touch, and the last time you cleaned them. Your steering wheel, your cellphone, light switches, remote controls... All these are great places for germs to pass from person to person.

■ **Stay home:** Your mother taught you to share, but when you're sick, be selfish. Keep your germs to yourself, rest and recover, and get back on your feet more quickly. You'll be more productive than those people who soldier through it and you won't infect your co-workers.

The material contained in this document has been prepared from sources believed to be accurate and reliable. Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a safety professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at his/her own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner.

Getting the silent killer to make some noise

It's colourless, odourless, and tasteless. Exposure can cause symptoms similar to the flu and food poisoning. It's sometimes called the "silent killer." It's carbon monoxide and it can be deadly.

When it comes to protecting yourself and your family from the dangers of carbon monoxide exposure, the first line of defence is always the proper maintenance of fuel-burning appliances. When fuel-burning devices are properly installed and maintained, they will operate as designed and vent all exhaust products outdoors.

The second line of defence is the installation of carbon monoxide alarms. The importance of having carbon monoxide alarms is heightened during the winter months when we keep doors and windows closed and increase our use of fuel-burning equipment, such as furnaces.

Here are some tips to guide you in the installation and maintenance of your carbon monoxide alarm:

■ Alarms should be certified by the Canadian Standards Association, CAN/CGA 6.19, or the Underwriters Laboratories 2034 standard.

■ We're most susceptible to the effects of carbon monoxide while we're asleep - install your alarm near your home's primary sleeping area.

■ Install additional alarms in other sleeping areas, near rooms where your combustion appliances are located (like adjacent to your furnace room), or rooms near a potential source of carbon monoxide (like an attached garage or fireplace).

■ Don't let furniture, draperies or obstructions to normal air flow block your carbon monoxide alarms.

■ If your CO alarm sounds, open windows and doors and evaluate your situation. If anyone is experiencing the flu-like symptoms of CO exposure, seek medical help or call 911.

Health and Safety Minute

Warm up to winter exercise

(NC)-Whether ice and snow make your eyes sparkle or leave you cold, with a little imagination you can stay active when the mercury plummets. (If you're heading outdoors, remember to wear a hat even on moderate days. And if it's very cold, breathe through a balaclava or scarf.)

■ **Take to the trails.** Consider taking a lesson in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Both activities have a low impact on your knees, yet work the whole body and can burn an incredible 480 calories per hour even at a relatively relaxed pace. Many winter resorts, ski clubs and provincial parks offer equipment rentals as well as instructions.

■ **Play in the snow.** Build a snowman or a snow-fort, or make snow angels. Or challenge the neighbours to a game of 'snow-pitch'.

■ **Don't forget your shovel.** That snowy sidewalk has to be cleared anyway, so why not turn shovelling into an impromptu workout? Shovelling snow requires as much energy (read: burns as many calories) as running at 15 km per hour. A fully-loaded shovel can weigh up to 25 pounds. But you can minimize the strain on your muscles and joints and still get a great work out by taking your time and stretching before hand.

■ **Discover exercise DVDs.** Borrow some beginner's exercise DVDs from the library (tai chi, stretching and low-impact aerobics are all great options that don't require lots of gear). When you find one that suits you, invest in your own copy.

■ **Sign up for swimming, dancing or tai chi.** Many community centres and pools offer low-cost lessons and exercise classes. Some gyms and dance studios also offer seasonal discounts.

Tips for keeping your fresh food fresh

(NC)-The statistics are staggering. North Americans throw away nearly half of our food uneaten. Whether shopping for one or for the whole family, people are starting to skip buying fresh foods - seeing them as costly waste.

Sue Mah, registered dietitian and renowned speaker, has a few simple tips to help you keep your food budget in check and your groceries fresh for longer.

Her first rule is the most simple: make sure you are getting the absolute best price to begin with. "You no longer have to shop at premium or expensive grocers to get the best fresh foods. Supercentres stock great quality fresh produce, ensuring that price is no longer an obstacle to eating well."

Once you get the food home, Sue has some easy tips to making sure you get the maximum value out of your fresh food purchases.

Fresh fruit and veggies

■ For apples, keep them in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. Apples left at room temperature will soften ten times faster which can lead to waste.

■ Leave the stem and seeds intact if you're only going to use half a pepper or half a melon. The stem and seeds help to prevent the food from drying out.

■ Wrap washed and dried lettuce leaves in a damp tea towel or damp paper towels.

■ Store asparagus stalks upright in a shallow pan of water, or wrap the base of asparagus stalks with a damp paper towel and place in a plastic bag.

■ Fresh garlic, on the other hand, will sprout if kept in the fridge; keep it in a dry, dark, cool place instead.



■ Find a similar dry, dark spot for potatoes, because they will shrivel and turn green if kept in the light.

■ Mushrooms should be stored in a paper, not plastic bag.

In your fridge

■ Keep milk and eggs in the coldest part of the fridge, not on the fridge door.

■ Store raw meat on the bottom shelf of the fridge.

■ Use raw, fresh meat within 2-3 days and ground meat within 1-2 days of purchase.

■ Use cooked leftovers within 3-4 days.

■ Keep whole wheat flour, brown rice, wheat germ and ground flax in the fridge to help them last longer.

In your pantry

■ Store pasta, grains and rice in a cool dry location in the pantry.

■ Practice the "first in, first out" rule. Use up the oldest cans first and put the newer cans at the back.

No one wants to waste their money. Follow these simple tips to ensure that your food stays fresh and delicious long enough to get eaten.

Benefits of Electronic Health Records (EHRs)

(NC)—Once completed, Canada's electronic health record system will contain a secure and comprehensive electronic record of every Canadian's vital health history that can be accessed and shared by authorized health care providers in your community, your province or territory, and eventually across the country.

The main benefits for patients are:

■ Improved emergency room visits;

■ Support for patients with chronic conditions;

■ Reduced wait times;

■ Fewer duplicate tests;

■ Better diagnosis; and

■ Support for patients in remote areas.

You can learn more about electronic health solutions online at www.knowingsbetter.ca.

Comfort ZONE

SAFETY MEETING

Read this part of the meeting aloud

Avoid winter slips and trips

Today's safety meeting is about winter slips and trips.

Slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work and can happen almost anywhere. Ninety five per cent of major slips result in broken bones and they can also be the initial cause for a range of other types of accidents such as falls from heights.

Slips and trips can happen for a number of reasons, but all too frequently we jump to conclusions about why they happen rather than really looking for the true cause, or, we decide that it is just one of those things and do nothing.

There are many things you can do to prevent slips, trips and falls:

- Prevent hazards such as water, oils, cardboard and waste from getting onto the floor
- Make sure the floor is clean and dry
- Clear up spills immediately
- Dispose of water materials
- Remove any obstructions
- Store goods safely
- Keep workstations clear of obstacles
- Make sure flooring materials are level and secure
- Ensure you have adequate lighting

During this time of year, you are particularly susceptible to slips and falls. Here are some tips to keep in mind when getting around in the winter weather:

■ Select appropriate footwear. There is no single shoe sole material that is perfect under all conditions, however, footwear with rubber soles provide better traction on ice and snow than leather or plastic soles.

■ Think about the best route to your destination and plan on a little extra time to get there. Avoid rushing, taking

shortcuts over snow piles or traversing areas where snow or ice removal is incomplete.

■ Test the ground in front of you before you walk on it. Slippery ground does not always appear slippery and so it is important to test the ground in front of you before transferring your full weight. Stick one foot out in front of you and move it around on the surface of the ground to test how slippery it is. This will give you a good idea of what it would be like to walk on it.

■ If you have no choice but to walk on a slippery surface, bend slightly forward and shorten your stride or shuffle your feet for better stability.

■ Many slips and falls occur during entry or exit from vehicles. Be particularly careful and hold on to the vehicle for support.

■ When entering a building be sure to take advantage of floor mats to remove moisture from the soles of your shoes. This will help protect you, as well as others who follow, from having to walk on wet or slippery surfaces.

■ Take responsibility for immediately reporting slip and fall hazards.

Thanks for your attention today .

Comfort ZONE

Distribute to meeting attendees

SAFETY MEETING

Keep this handout for handy reference.

Avoid winter slips and trips

During this time of year, you are particularly susceptible to slips and falls. Here are some tips to keep in mind when getting around in the winter weather:

- Select appropriate footwear. There is no single shoe sole material that is perfect under all conditions, however, footwear with rubber soles provide better traction on ice and snow than leather or plastic soles.

- Think about the best route to your destination and plan on a little extra time to get there. Avoid rushing, taking shortcuts over snow piles or traversing areas where snow or ice removal is incomplete.

- If you have no choice but to walk on a slippery surface, bend slightly forward and shorten your stride or shuffle your feet for better stability.

- Many slips and falls occur during entry or exit from vehicles. Be particularly careful and hold on to the vehicle for support.

- Test the ground in front of you before you walk on it. Slippery ground does not always appear slippery and so it is important to test the ground in front of you before transferring your full weight. Stick one foot out in front of you and move it around on the surface of the ground to test how slippery it is. This will give you a good idea of what it would be like to walk on it.

Comfort ZONE

Attendance sheet

SAFETY MEETING

Avoid winter slips and trips

Meeting date: _____

Have meeting attendees sign below:

Meeting leader: _____

Meeting Quiz:

1. There is really nothing you can do to avoid slips and trips.

True
False

2. You should test the ground you are about to walk on to see if it is slippery before you put your full weight on it.

True
False

3. If you must walk on a slippery surface, bend slightly forward and shorten your stride or shuffle your feet for better stability

True
False

4. Keep the floor free of hazards to avoid tripping.

True
False

5. You should hold on to your vehicle for support when entering or exiting a vehicle when the conditions are slippery.

True
False

6. Slips are one of the most common injuries at work.

True.
False

Answers to safety
meeting quiz:
1. False
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. True