



Lead Story

## Mercury awareness

■ If you google "mercury", do you know what tops your search list? Freddie.

That's right, the late lead singer from the legendary rock band Queen.

This goes to show how rarely people search for information on mercury, a toxic heavy metal that we actually come into contact with more than we realize.

Mercury can interfere with the development of children and unborn fetuses and may cause a wide range of health issues in adults, including brain, kidney and liver damage.

And, if you are someone who has made the move to save energy by using a compact fluorescent light bulbs(CFL), you are sitting next to mercury.

According to Natural Resources Canada, CFLs contain varying quantities of mercury - typically between 2 and 5 mg, where linear fluorescents contain generally between 5 and 25 mg depending of the quality and the length of the tubes.

All fluorescent lamps need a small amount of mercury to operate efficiently. Since CFLs are simply small or compact versions of the common fluorescent lamp, they contain a very small amount of mercury which is sealed within the glass tubing.

While no mercury is released when the bulbs are intact or in use, the presence of mercury has raised questions about the safety and environmental impact of these products over their lifecycle.

CFLs are safe to use in your home. They pose no danger to you or your family when used properly. However, they should be handled with care.

CFLs are made of glass tubing and

**THE TEN STEPS**

- 1 Put on protective gloves
- 2 Put on protective mask
- 3 Open sturdy box
- 4 Pick up large fragments and place in the box
- 5 Sweep up splinters using stiff card or paper and place in the box
- 6 Clean area using damp cloth
- 7 Place damp cloth in box
- 8 Seal sturdy box using tape
- 9 Label contents of box with labels and pen or paper
- 10 Take sealed box to waste removal area and pass to waste disposal contractor

can break if dropped or handled roughly. Always screw and unscrew the lamp by its base and never forcefully twist the CFL into a light socket by its glass tubes.

They should also be recycled properly to ensure landfills do not become contaminated.

Before ruling out CFLs because of the mercury they contain and the extra effort involved in their disposal, keep in mind that in areas with coal-fired power stations, the use of CFLs saves on mercury emissions when compared to the use of incandescent bulbs.

This is due to the reduced electrical power demand, reducing in turn the amount of mercury released by coal as it is burned.

The federal government has adopted a national standard for lighting efficiency that will come into effect in 2012.

Most traditional, incandescent bulbs currently available will not meet the required performance level., so proper handling and disposal of CFL's is important to know.

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Strength and balance help avoid falls

## M a k i n g   H e a d l i n e s

# Picking the shoe that's right for you

(NC)-Running season often brings with it the need for new running shoes. With so many different types and styles of running shoe available, it can be very confusing to know which one to choose.

Running shoes are designed to protect the foot from the stress of running, while permitting the runner to achieve his/her maximum potential. The Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors offers the following tips to help you select the right shoe for you.

First, you need to know your feet. People with low arches, called pronators, will need a shoe that provides some degree of stability. A shoe with good cushioning is important for people with high arches,

called supinators.

There are three main features that need to be considered when selecting a running shoe:

**1. Shape.** To determine the shape of the shoe, look at the sole. Imagine a straight line from the middle of the heel to the top of the shoe. In a curve-shaped shoe, most comfortable for supinators, the line will pass through the outer half of the toe.

A straight-shaped shoe will have a line that passes through the middle of the toe. These shoes are built to give pronators added stability.

**2. Construction.** There are three types of shoe construction. To evaluate this, take the insole out and look at what type of stitching is used on the bottom. In board construction shoes,

built specifically for pronators, the bottom of the shoe will not have any visible stitching.

Combination shoes, appropriate for mild pronators or supinators, will have stitching that begins halfway. On slip-constructed shoes, you will see stitching running the entire length of the shoe, providing the flexibility supinators need.

**3. Midsole.** Most of the cushioning and stability of a running shoe is determined by the midsole. A dual-density midsole provides shock absorption as well as some stability, perfect for pronators.

Single density midsoles offer good cushioning but are not great at providing stability, making them better for supinators.

## Retired fire captain continues carbon monoxide crusade

(NC)-After 34 years as a firefighter and most recently a fire captain, John Gignac retired his badge and did what many new retirees do -- dreamed of golf and spending time with his wife Sandra and their grandkids.

Then tragedy hit. John's niece Laurie, her husband Richard and their two children Cassandra and Jordan died in December 2008 in their Woodstock, Ontario home when a clogged vent from their gas fireplace forced deadly carbon monoxide gas back into their home.

For any family, this was unthinkable. For a lifetime firefighter, it was unimaginable.

"As I stood beside my brother Ben, watching over Laurie as she fought for life in the hospital, I vowed I would do everything I could to make sure that no other family would ever have to face what we were facing," Gignac says. "That day I came out of retirement with a new mission in life. I would be

Laurie's messenger to warn people of the dangers of CO poisoning and the need for CO alarms in their homes."

Gignac mobilized quickly. In the first year following the tragedy, he established The Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education to spread awareness of CO dangers and raise money to purchase CO alarms for less-privileged Canadians.

In 2010, he became an outspoken advocate and educator on the need for CO alarms. He also spoke at the Ontario Legislature to urge MPPs to pass a bill that would make them mandatory in all homes across the province.

He has also done numerous interviews with media in many Canadian cities as carbon monoxide deaths and near-miss incidents have increased.

Gignac's foundation recently passed a major milestone, receiving its first corporate financial donations from Scotiabank and the Co-operators

Insurance Company. The foundation has also received some personal donations and, last September, organized its first annual charity golf tournament. These funds will allow him to continue his educational crusade and purchase CO alarms for fire departments in Canada over the coming months.

"My life's work will not be complete until every home has a working CO detector," Gignac says.

"A CO detector in Laurie's home would have saved their lives. I know she is tapping me on the shoulder saying, 'Don't give up, Uncle John'. I am doing this for Laurie and for all Canadians whose lives will be spared by installing a CO alarm."

More information about The Hawkins-Gignac Foundation, life-saving CO tips and how to make a tax-deductible donation can be found at [www.endthesilence.ca](http://www.endthesilence.ca).

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

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## M a k i n g   H e a d l i n e s

# Mercury awareness

*Continued from page 1*

Health Canada offers these tips:

- Always handle CFLs carefully when installing and removing them.

- Check with your municipality to see if CFLs can be recycled in your area. Recycling them means that the small amount of mercury they contain will not end up in the environment.

The results of the Health Canada study showed that, when either CFLs or regular light bulbs (incandescent) are used at a distance of 30 cm or more, UV emissions do not present a health risk to the general population.

If you have skin sensitivities to UV, or have Lupus or another auto-immune disease that makes you sensitive to UV, you can take these steps:

- Buy CFLs that are marked low UV.

- Buy CFLs that have a glass cover already added, which will help further filter out UV radiation.

- Use additional glass, plastic or fabric materials in your lighting fixtures to act as UV filters.

- Don't sit or stand too close to the CFL, as this will reduce the level of UV exposure.

Detailed instructions on what to do if you break a CFL can be found by visiting the Health Canada website: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/prod/cfl-afc-eng.php>

There are other household and commercial products that contain mercury including: thermometers and thermostats, batteries, dental amalgam, medical/measuring devices and switches and relays among others. Awareness of the things we use and proper handling of them goes a long way to ensure the safety of ourselves and of our loved ones.

## Tips for dry winter skin

(NC)-Eczema is increasingly becoming a common skin condition, with 15 to 20 per cent of the population suffering from this disease. Symptoms of eczema include very dry, flaky skin, red rashes and constant itching. Symptoms can range from mild to severe, where in the most severe cases the skin is so inflamed that it becomes irritated and bleeds.

Managing eczema is more than dealing with dry, itchy skin. It's about developing a treatment regime that lets sufferers feel in control of eczema-prone skin. Here are some simple tips and facts to help you become more proactive with the condition:

**Bathe and Moisturize** - Bathing is the first line of defense in managing eczema-prone skin. Prepare a bath with lukewarm water, add an emulsifying oil and soak for five minutes or apply moisturizing wash directly to the skin and gently rinse-off. The skin will actually absorb some of the water and oil. Gently dry off excess water with a soft towel, or briefly air dry if air is warm. Moisturizing the skin is a necessary final step which will help protect the skin's natural moisture barrier.

**Avoid the Triggers** - Harsh soaps and detergents, fragrances and perfumes and certain foods may cause eczema occurrences. Heat and sweating cause irritation, and can worsen eczema. Staying in a cool place during hot weather will help prevent itching. Consider wearing loose, 100 per cent cotton clothes so as not to irritate the skin. Excessive heat and low humidity creates an environment with reduced moisture content in the air. Consider using a humidifier in the house or bedroom.

**Educate Yourself and Seek Support** - Know you are not alone. There are many others out there that share the frustration of eczema. If you think you or a family member might be suffering from eczema, consult your doctor or dermatologist before starting any treatment. For more information on eczema, visit the Eczema Society of Canada's website at [www.eczemahelp.ca](http://www.eczemahelp.ca).

## World Kidney Day a day to remember

(NC)-Why is the 2011 World Kidney Day focusing on cardiovascular disease? Because kidney disease is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, Canada's number one killer.

"If we're going to have aggressive measures to reduce cardiovascular disease, addressing kidney disease early is one way of having a positive impact," says Dr. Reich, a renal researcher funded by The Kidney Foundation of Canada. Early detection and treatment of kidney disease can slow or stop disease progression.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada website at [www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca) can help you learn whether you are at risk for

**Amazing Kidneys!**

**Protect your kidneys – control diabetes!**



kidney disease and describes lifestyle changes that can help minimize your risk.

The website also features health screening and World Kidney Day events taking place in your region.

## How to choose the best cellphone for you

(NC)-Staying connected is part of daily life for Canadians. Today everyone wants to take part in social networking, text messaging and sharing photos. As the number of cellphone options continues to grow, offering more options and features, choosing the device best suited to your needs can be a daunting task.

For someone who will use their cellphone mainly for calls, a simple cellphone with basic functions will do the job. There are a myriad of traditional handsets that offer good call quality and a stable connection. A phone with fewer features tends to be less expensive than a smartphone, and will be easier to use for anyone who is not technologically inclined.

If you have your heart set on a smartphone, there are a lot of different choices and one thing you need to consider is the platform it runs on. The operating system (OS) you choose will give your phone a variety of capabilities.

Smartphones also provide access to your calendar, e-mail, text messages, documents, RSS feeds and provide mobile Internet access.

Design is another factor to consider when choosing the best cellphone for you. Designs vary almost as much as operating systems. The wide range varies from flip-open clamshell-style phones to basic candy bar-style phones to slider-style phones with full-QWERTY keyboards. Consider its ergonomics -- can you hold it comfortably against your ear? Can you hear callers and your callers hear you without constant adjustments?

Another important feature to factor into your smartphone decision making is the screen's contrast, backlight and resolution. Choose a smartphone with the best possible screen available that allows you to adjust such settings. That way you can make text and graphics easily viewable--even outside or in bright places. Choosing a cell is all about figuring out what is important for you and your needs.

## Super Vision

# The danger of complacency

BY BRYDEN WINSBY  
FOR COMFORT ZONE

Complacency can affect any organization in many different ways, and safety is one of the more important ones.

Statistics might be hard to find that prove complacency is a major cause of workplace accidents, but it's a safe bet that many of them have occurred because someone took a shortcut, failed to report a hazard or otherwise did something incorrectly, even though they knew better.

Complacency happens at all levels. Workers develop unsafe habits because incidents are few and no one insists that they do something properly. From a management perspective, whether in the boardroom or the supervisor's office, complacency about safety can occur because other requirements or objectives have taken precedence. Improving productivity, boosting sales and focusing on customer service can easily move higher up the priority pole.

Another cause of complacency is the routine nature of many jobs. Tasks become so regular that functions are performed without conscious thought (driving a motor vehicle is a good everyday example).

Too many people also still believe that accidents are something that happens to others. Despite realizing there can be costly consequences to not following safe procedures, their attitude of invincibility seems to be unshakeable.

Managers and supervisors can play a key role in helping avoid the complacency trap. The first step is to appreciate the very fact that it exists, and can pose a very serious threat. They need to understand there is a compelling business case for making safety a top priority.

They also need to understand that their actions and attitudes have a huge influence on employees - beyond simply ensuring that certain levels of performance are met.

Here are some ways to achieve "non-complacency":

**Commitment** - Be thoroughly aware of your organization's health and safety

### CHECK YOURSELF:

Vigilance can help managers and supervisors reinforce their own attitude and that of others. When they're always on the lookout for an unsafe situation, they're anything but complacent - and they are a lot more likely to make sure employees have the knowledge and skills necessary to stay out of harm's way. 53

program, how it affects your particular department, and the processes by which it can be reviewed and improved.

**Communication** - Take time to make personal contact with employees, where they work, not on your turf. Discuss their concerns and make sure the conversation goes both ways. When you observe unsafe behaviours or conditions, or are told about them, respond immediately.

**Involvement** - Encourage employees to take an active part in development and improvement of the health and safety program. This can include planning and leading safety meetings, participating in walk-through inspections, or completing questionnaires (anonymously if necessary, to eliminate worries about recrimination).

Once employees see managers and supervisors taking safety seriously, the more likely they are to break bad habits and develop good ones. This is especially true when individual attention is provided. Some situations can be handled best in a group setting, but often it is a one-on-one that can have the most positive result. Safety must be built into all aspects of the organization, from equipment and workspace design to operating procedures, maintenance and hazard awareness. A safe attitude does not come automatically; it must be learned and reinforced.

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# Checklists: A valuable safety tool

BY BRYDEN WINSBY  
FOR COMFORT ZONE

Whether we are buying groceries or keeping track of the day's tasks, most of us rely on lists to remind ourselves what needs to be done. Those lists might be maintained by computer "organizer" software, or be stuck to the refrigerator door with a magnet. If they are lost or misplaced, a lot of aggravation can result.

Just as with our everyday lives, checklists are important to workplace safety - much more so, in fact. Checklists are an essential part of an effective program to keep workers healthy and safe.

Employers have a legal responsibility to implement such a program, which in turn must meet certain standards. Employers, along with their managers and supervisors, must exercise what is called due diligence - taking all precautions that are reasonable under the circumstances.

That's where checklists come in. They comprise part of an organization's documentation - the records that provide a history of occupational health and safety program activities, and improvements made to it.

Checklists can be used for a wide variety of purposes, from inspections and hazard identification, to emergency planning, new employee orientation and determining what personal protective equipment is best for a specific task.

Checklists can be part of the process that develops a written OHS program, and they can be used as part of the

program itself. For example, one of most common uses is for housekeeping purposes. Here is what would appear on a typical checklist for a regular walk-through of the premises:

- Floors
- Halls and aisles
- Stairways
- Exits and entrances
- Lighting
- Ladders
- Machinery and equipment
- Signs and tags
- Stacking and storage
- Roadways and parking areas
- Ventilation
- Waste disposal

Each is inspected to determine if conditions meet acceptable standards, and if not, what needs to be done, and by whom. All of that information would be contained on the completed checklist.

As with any tool, the proper use of checklists is a must. Depending on memory or scribbled notes simply won't do. If required or requested action is not taken, the exercise has been in vain - and it won't help meet the test of due diligence.

There are some additional benefits to the effective use of checklists. The fewer health and safety incidents an organization has, the lower its operating costs will be over time, which should mean higher profits.

By helping provide employees with a safer working environment, checklists also help build a better reputation for the

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organization. The safer it is known to be, the more likely the organization will have qualified individuals wanting to work for it.

You might have difficulty finding a one-size-fits all checklist for a particular purpose. They can vary greatly according to industry and circumstances. However, many of them can be tailored fairly easily to suit your needs. Templates are widely available on the Internet from recognized safety agencies, workers' compensation departments and business organizations.

Whether you are using checklists to review and revise your health and safety policies, or to develop procedures for a specific work process, it does not hurt to involve workers directly.

## Brother, can you spare an hour to think about the Earth

(NC)-If your hydro bills aren't already screaming for you to conserve electricity, Earth Hour gives you another reason to do so. On Saturday March 26, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., individuals, businesses, and governments around the world will take action to reduce their impact on the environment for Earth Hour. This action usually includes switching off non-essential lights and avoiding electronics. But what can you do for a whole hour?

Here are a few ideas:

**Enjoy candlelight.** Candles can add romance, mystery, and intrigue to any occasion (even Earth Hour) Set up a few candles and picnic in your living room, share funny stories, or look through old photo albums with your kids.

Just be sure to either use 100 per cent beeswax or soy candles, which are much better for the environment than the regular paraffin wax ones.

**Go stargazing.** No, not of the

Brangelina variety. Get out your telescope and see if you can identify any constellations.

Stargazing is a great way to take advantage of the darkness and admire the beauty of the planet.

**Be social.** Invite neighbours and friends over for a night of dimly lit board games, cards, or charades.

After Earth Hour is over, challenge yourself to keep the lights off for the rest of the night.

## HEALTH &amp; SAFETY ROUNDUP

## Seminar listings

The following is a cross-section of dates of health and safety seminars taking place nationally and internationally. Would you like to promote your event? Email us at [editor@skilven.com](mailto:editor@skilven.com)

### Mar 2-3 CMHA BC's 8th Annual Conference Bottom Line : The Psychologically Safe Workplace

Vancouver, British Columbia  
Phone: 604-688-3234 ext 231  
Fax: 604-688-3236  
E-mail : [conference@cmha.bc.ca](mailto:conference@cmha.bc.ca)  
Web : [www.bottomlineconference.ca](http://www.bottomlineconference.ca)

### Mar 23-25 Safety Services Nova Scotia 29th Annual Health and Safety Conference

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Phone:(902) 454-9621  
Fax:(902) 454-6027  
Web : <http://www.safetyservicesns.ca>

### Mar 23 Health and Safety Forum: Building an Enterprise-Wide Safety Culture

Toronto, Ontario  
Phone: 1-800-267-0666  
E-mail : [registrar@conferenceboard.ca](mailto:registrar@conferenceboard.ca)

### Mar 24 Health and Safety Training for Managers and Supervisors in the Canadian Federal Jurisdiction

Calgary, Alberta  
Phone: 403-818-8118 / 1-866-374-1766  
E-mail : [cjodouin@escalade.ca](mailto:cjodouin@escalade.ca)  
Web : <http://www.EscaladeTraining.ca>

## Study suggests driving tired is like driving drunk

Dutch Researchers at Utrecht University in the Netherlands found that driving for just three hours at night was similar to being intoxicated, and driving just two hours after dark was like being slightly intoxicated.

In conducting the test, the researchers had 14 men, aged 21 to 25, drive under supervision at night from 3 a.m. until 5 a.m., 1 a.m. until 5 a.m. and 9 p.m. until 5 a.m. They were to drive at a constant speed of 80 km while staying centered in the lane. Their performance was monitored and recorded, and deviations from the center line measured.

The academics, led by Dr. Joris C. Verster, found remarkable parallels with drunk driving. Two hours of nighttime driving resulted in the same errors experienced with a blood alcohol content of 0.05. Performance was on par with a BAC of 0.08 percent after three hours. And 4.5 hours at the wheel in the dark was akin to 0.10 percent.

Opening the window for a blast of cold air or cranking up the stereo had little effect, they said.

The report, published in the Journal of Sleep Research, says drivers should recognize and be aware of the risk.

## Consult your dentist for source of migraines

(NC)—If you are among the 2.7 million Canadians who suffer from chronic headaches or migraines, it may be time you consider a visit to the dentist.

The dentist? Yes, experts say a visit to a specially-trained neuromuscular dentist can actually help you discover and relieve a potential source of your migraines or chronic headaches. For countless migraine sufferers, the cause of their pain is related to a condition called temporomandibular joint disorder, or TMD.

According to Dr. Mark Duncan, clinical director at LVI Global, the leading post-graduate dental training centre, the cause of TMD is related to muscle strains from a bad bite. "We know that if your bite is not right, it often leads to chronic discomfort and pain," he explained. "Just like flexing your arm for a second is comfortable, but flexing it continuously for two to three minutes starts to hurt, a strained jaw position eventually leads to discomfort. Especially when you consider an average person's jaw closes more than 3,000 times a day."

Dr. Duncan added that a misaligned bite causes unnatural tension in neck and jaw muscles, eventually diminishing breathing, strength and flexibility. "The jaw muscles and those around your head and neck are strained and constantly trying to find a more relaxed position.

This strain is what causes the symptoms to occur."

In addition to headaches and migraines, other symptoms of TMD include grinding of the teeth, heavy snoring, and sleep apnea, as well as facial pain, neck, shoulder and back pain, clicking or popping in the jaw, limited jaw movement and tingling fingers.

It affects men, women and children. In many cases TMD is misdiagnosed or undiagnosed. Only one out of five people who suffer from the disorder will seek help from a doctor and on average, wait four years to do so.

Fortunately, TMD is highly treatable and doesn't require surgery. Through pain-free computer analysis, a neuromuscular dentist can locate your jaw's most comfortable resting position and fit you with an orthotic, an appliance that resembles an athlete's mouth guard. If the new jaw position eliminates your pain and discomfort, crowns and veneers can be used to permanently hold this new relaxed position.

"Treating this jaw disorder commonly improves symptoms and in many cases, permanently eliminates migraines," added Dr. Duncan.

More information on this topic or help locating a Canadian neuromuscular dentist is available online at [www.leadingdentists.com](http://www.leadingdentists.com).

## Health and Safety Minute

# Springing into back health

(NC)-Every spring, we head outdoors for activities like walking, biking, canoeing and golfing. While it is wonderful to be out and about enjoying the warmer weather, it is also a time when new activities can take a toll on your back.

The Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors offers the following tips to help you get back into the spring of things.

- 1. Ease into it.** You may have lost flexibility and muscle tone if you were sedentary during the winter months. If you're a golfer, try nine holes of golf instead of 18. For gardeners, resist the urge to rake the entire yard in one day.
- 2. Stretch before and after.** Warm up and cool down your muscles with five to 10 minutes of gentle, slow stretching exercises to help prevent injuries.
- 3. Take a break.** When working in the yard, alternate tasks and positions, and take a break every hour.
- 4. Lift it right.** When lifting objects, keep your back straight and bend your knees. Lift with your legs and hold heavy loads close to your body.
- 5. The right technique.** When



gardening, kneel to plant and weed, and rake with one leg in front of the other. For new sports activities, start with a lesson and make sure your equipment is the correct size for you.

- 6. Wear protective gear.** Wear a helmet when cycling, rollerblading or skateboarding and do not forget wrist, elbow and knee guards. A hat, sunscreen and breaks in the shade will help prevent overexposure to the sun's rays.

Start with light to moderate physical activity and gradually increase the intensity. However, despite your best efforts, you may still end up stiff and sore. Studies show that the sooner you begin to move those sore muscles again, the faster your recovery will be and regular chiropractic visits can help your body's ability to recover and heal itself.

## Too little sunshine can be bad for your health

(NC)-Sun exposure on bare skin is our major source of vitamin D, a nutrient important for bone development, blood vessel health, immune function and disease prevention. Factors such as the length of sunny seasons, geographic latitude, cloud cover, smog, and use of sunscreens can reduce your exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays, at the same time reducing your body's ability to produce vitamin D.

To ensure you minimize health risks associated with excess exposure to damaging UV rays, and still get enough Vitamin D, supplementation is often

recommended, combined with small amounts of sun exposure. New research has led the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Dermatology Association to increase their recommended daily intake of vitamin D for Canadian adults by five times - from 200 IU to 1000 IU daily.

The good news is that vitamin D3 supplements, the most recommended form of vitamin D, are generally inexpensive and come in forms that should appeal to all family members. Whatever the weather, there's no reason to miss out on the health benefits of vitamin D.

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.

## Spring safety checklist

(NC)- As the season changes from winter to spring, everyone is eager to get out and enjoy the warmer weather, outdoor spaces and tackle the "to-do" lists that have been growing over the winter months.

Here's a list of spring safety reminders:

### Safety in the Yard

When planning projects that require digging, such as planting a tree or building a fence, remember that natural gas and other utility lines could be buried in your yard. It's the law to locate buried natural gas lines before you dig.

Make sure you landscape carefully near gas meters and regulators. Never raise the level of a garden so that soil touches your meter or regulator. Doing so could result in corrosion and cause a gas leak.

### Safety before you Barbecue

With grilling season around the corner, it's a great time to review your manufacturer's instructions for the maintenance and use of your barbecue. For many of us, the barbecue has been out of use for the winter, so it's also a good time to give it a thorough inspection.

### Safety in a Flood

Spring showers and melting snow can increase the possibility of water main breaks and sewer backups. With your safety in mind, never enter any flooded areas. If you're experiencing a flood, don't attempt to restart your natural gas appliances until you've had them inspected. Natural gas appliances (including furnaces, boilers and water heaters) that have been submerged, partially submerged, come into contact with water, or had their gas controls or electrical cords come into contact with water are considered unsafe and must not be used until inspected by a licensed HVAC contractor.

Remember - always call your local gas utility if you smell natural gas or suspect damage to natural gas equipment due to flooding.

## Health and Safety Minute

### Don't delay...these two simple tasks will keep your family safe

(NC)-Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today. Most people not only relate to this phrase, many will say it was coined specifically for them. At some time, all of us can be guilty of putting off the simplest of tasks. Most are harmless, but some can be deadly.

A home safety expert with Kidde Canada, the leading smoke and carbon monoxide alarm manufacturer in the country, urgently reminds us to never procrastinate those things that can keep our families safe.

Here are some home safety tips to help protect your family from fire and CO tragedy.

#### CO Prevention:

- Install one CSA-approved CO alarm on each level of your home and outside sleeping areas.

- Test all CO alarms monthly and replace them every five to seven years.

- Change the batteries at least once per year.

- Have a licensed inspector check heating systems and other fuel-burning appliances annually, including fireplaces.

- Keep clear all exhaust flues or ducts used by water heaters, ranges and clothes dryers (snow, ice, leaves, garbage etc).

#### Fire Prevention:

- Install one cUL-approved smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside or in sleeping areas (if you sleep with your door closed).

- Test all smoke alarms monthly and replace them every 10 years, whether battery operated or hard-wired.

- Change batteries at least once per year.

- Prepare a fire escape plan with your family and practise it, ensuring you identify two exits from every room if possible. Consider buying a two-storey safety ladder to ensure there is a second escape route via a window.

### Smart phone app helps tweens to clean teeth

(NC)-Establishing good oral care habits from a young age can help Canadians to keep their teeth healthy for a lifetime. For tweens especially - children between the ages of eight and twelve - it's a particularly important age when they begin developing their own personalities, style and habits.

To help make brushing more fun for tweens, Crest and Oral-B have created a smart phone application to encourage them to look after their teeth. Called "Yuck Mouth", this free app is designed to help tweens and their parents have fun learning about proper brushing, flossing and rinsing. The timed game first has users pick a smile image then decide which oral health tools should be used to fight off gross food stuffs or odours that can cause a mouth to be yucky. This coincides with the launch of the new Crest and Oral-B Pro-Health FOR ME line-up of products designed specifically for tweens.

Octopus causing bad breath? Rinse it away with Crest Pro-Health FOR ME mouth rinse. Broccoli stuck in your teeth? Brush it away with Crest Pro-Health FOR ME anti-cavity toothpaste. For those without a smartphone, Yuck Mouth is also available as a free online game.

"Tweens have unique oral care needs, but can sometimes need a little help following the



rules," says Dr. Janet Tamo, consulting dentist to Crest and Oral-B. "If there's a fun way to get tweens to listen and learn good oral care habits, like Crest and Oral-B's Yuck Mouth app, I'm all for it."

The Crest and Oral-B Pro-Health FOR ME line-up includes toothbrushes that are just the right size for older kids' mouths, and a toothpaste and rinse in flavours for tweens - all in unique packaging that's cool enough for this age group.

The "Yuck Mouth" smartphone app is available through iTunes and Android Market. The online game can be found at [www.crestprohealth.com](http://www.crestprohealth.com).

### Having a colonversation can save your life

(NC)-It can be difficult to have conversations about health with loved ones, especially when it's a taboo subject like colon cancer. A recent national survey found that nearly half of Canadians aged 50 to 74 are not comfortable suggesting loved ones get checked for colon cancer because they were afraid of embarrassing them. Yet, in 2009, an estimated 22,000 Canadians were diagnosed with colon cancer and 9,100 died from it. Colon cancer is the second leading cause of deaths caused by cancer - and affects both men and women. If caught early, it is highly treatable, yet many may not be having the discussion or getting screened because they are afraid to bring up the topic.

To encourage this life-saving conversation, The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer invites Canadians to have a colonversation to help learn why, where and how to get screened to keep your colon healthy. The Colonversation campaign is devoted to raising awareness about colon cancer and encouraging people to have a conversation about the disease.

The campaign includes an important online resource - [www.colonversation.ca](http://www.colonversation.ca) - devoted entirely to colon cancer screening. Visitors can learn why, where and how to get screened, how to keep your colon healthy and make use of online educational videos and share the news through Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.



# Comfort ZONE

## SAFETY MEETING

Read this part of the meeting aloud

## Don't let a fall bring you down

*Today's safety meeting is about avoiding falls by improving your strength and balance.*

Taking a tumble can cause serious injury that affects your everyday life and independence. One of the best ways to reduce your risk of slipping, tripping and falling is to improve your strength and balance. Here are a few tips for staying on your feet.

### Strong legs for stability

Strengthening your leg muscles can reduce the chance of falling if you do lose your balance, as strong legs help stabilize you. While any activity that uses your legs is good, it is important to find something you enjoy. Here are some easy suggestions.

**Brisk walking.** Walking requires no special equipment other than a pair of supportive shoes. Make an after-dinner walk part of your daily routine or leave the car in the driveway and walk to pick up light groceries. There are many simple ways to get moving more often.

**Strength training.** Exercises that target specific leg muscles can often be easily done at home – there's no need to join an expensive gym. Or, if you enjoy being with a group, community centres often offer exercise programs for different age groups. Following is a simple leg strengthening exercise you can try at home.

**Leg extensions:** This exercise can be done while watching TV or sitting at the kitchen table. While seated, straighten one leg and gently lift it off the ground to a height that is comfortable for you. Hold for 10 seconds if you can. Lower that leg. Repeat with the other leg. As your strength grows, add ankle weights to give your legs even more of a workout.

### Balance

Your sense of balance is what keeps you on your feet. Poor eyesight, some medications and health conditions can cause dizziness or other balance problems. Keep these tips in mind:

1. Have an annual eye examination.
2. Review your medications, vitamins and herbal supplements with your pharmacist or family physician.
3. If you feel dizzy or faint, see a health professional for an evaluation.
4. Eat regularly and ensure you drink enough non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages.

Strength and balance work together to keep you steady. There are many activities that contribute to maintaining and improving balance and help build strength, such as swimming, cycling, Tai Chi, yoga, golf and dancing. Anything that gets you on your feet and moving will help maintain strength and balance.

### What is a good goal?

Aim for 20 minutes of exercise at least three times per week. Even better, build some physical activity into each day. Your independence is worth it.

Your handout offers several suggestions to keep in mind to avoid a nasty or debilitating fall. Share these tips with your family.

*Thanks for your attention today.*

# Comfort ZONE

Distribute to meeting attendees

SAFETY MEETING

Keep this handout for handy reference.

## Don't let a fall bring you down

Here are a few tips to share with your family about avoiding falls that could lead to serious injury.

- Reduce clutter to prevent tripping.
- Add lighting so you can see properly.
- Use handrails on staircases.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathroom.
- Remove reading glasses when walking around.
- Wear non-slip footwear inside and out.
- Sit down to change shoes and clothing.
- Keep everyday items handy to avoid reaching.

