

Working Healthy

A newsletter from the Mercy Occupational Health Program

SUMMER 2008

Mercy Occupational Health is a full service occupational health clinic providing all your business-related health needs.

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*Exceptional Medicine.
Extraordinary Care.*

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This is our first issue of *Working Healthy*, bringing you news from Mercy's Occupational Health program and information you can use in the workplace. *Working Healthy* is distributed by postal mail and by email, so if you prefer one method to the other, please give us a call. We look forward to keeping in touch!

Be Alert to Summertime Occupational Hazards

By Brian Johns, M.D.



As summer approaches, it's good to prepare for some of the occupational hazards that come with the season.

Heat-related illnesses range from fairly minor heat cramps to life-threatening heat stroke. In general, prevention is the key to avoiding problems with heat-related illnesses. Drink plenty of fluids (2-4 glasses of cool fluids per hour); wear lightweight, light-colored, loose fitting clothing when possible; and briefly stop activity to regularly get in the

shade, drink, and rest. And don't forget the sunscreen!

Poison ivy and poison oak are also common problems during the summer months, and again the focus should be on prevention. Be aware of what these plants look like, and avoid them if possible. Remember the old rhyme, "Leaves of three, leave me be." If some contact is unavoidable, be prepared by wearing long sleeves and pants. If you are exposed, wash your skin within a few minutes if possible. Severe or large rashes should be seen by the doctor.

Mosquitoes and ticks are another potential problem. To prevent bites, use repellents containing DEET. If possible, avoid areas that ticks love, such as moist, shady, brushy, overgrown areas. Shower every day after work or potential exposure, and inspect daily for ticks. If you find a tick, experts recommend gently and slowly pulling it with tweezers to remove it. Ticks are unlikely to cause serious disease if they are removed within a day or two.

We sometimes forget about the hazards of lightning, but over the last 30 years, it has caused an average of 62 deaths per year in the U.S. (which is the same as the average number of deaths caused by tornadoes), and at least 300 injuries per year. One third of these occur at work. If you can hear thunder, you can be hit by lightning. Go inside, if at all possible. If you can't get to a shelter, stay away from trees. Be the lowest point around. The National Weather Service says: If there is no shelter, crouch in the open, keeping twice as far away from a tree as it is tall.

Be aware of summertime hazards. Remember that prevention is the key. Enjoy the summer; before you know it, we will be shoveling snow again!

Mercy Occ Health Welcomes New Physician



A warm welcome goes to Tina Stec, MD, who joins Mercy's Occupational Health Program in August 2008. Dr. Stec graduated from the University of Iowa College of Medicine in 2005 and did a residence year in family practice before starting an Occupational and Environmental Medicine residency in 2006. She is interested in preventive medicine, specifically injury prevention and smoking cessation.

Prior to medical school, she received a B.A. in anthropology from UI. She attended Iowa on a track scholarship and ran cross-country as well. Dr. Stec was a two-time All-American in track in the mile and 3000 meter events and was a Top 10 finalist for the NCAA Woman of the Year Award in 1994. She grew up in the Chicago suburb of Downers Grove, but now considers herself an Iowan and Iowa City her home.

Dr. Stec has two boys who are 8 and 10 years old and a dog by the name of Mia. They are an active family and love the outdoors. Dr. Stec still enjoys running, not to mention swimming, hiking, and yoga. She and her family also enjoy traveling and are planning a trip to Alaska this summer.

FYI: Some Helpful Organizations and Web Sites

American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
770-455-7757 / www.aaohn.org

American Society of Safety Engineers
847-699-2929 / www.asse.org

Centers for Disease Control
404-639-3311 / www.cdc.gov

Drug and Alcohol Testing Industry Association
800-355-1257 / www.datia.org

Institute for a Drug Free Workplace
703-288-4300 / www.drugfreeworkplace.org