
CENTRAL PA HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT NEWSLETTER FOR HEALTHY OUTCOMES

August 2008 - Volume 8, Issue 7

a monthly newsletter provided by the Central PA Health Care Quality Unit

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Stages of Overheating

Source: Parade Magazine, July 24, 2005 – by Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld

Prolonged exposure to excessive heat leads to symptoms that become progressively worse unless you get out of the heat and do what is necessary to protect yourself.

At first, if you are exercising in the hot weather and not drinking enough water, you may develop *cramps* – painful spasms that occur most commonly in the legs but also in the abdomen and arms. When that happens, stop whatever you are doing, rest in a cool area and drink clear juice or a sports beverage. If the symptoms persist for more than an hour, see your doctor.



The next stage is *heat fatigue*. You feel faint, your skin is cool and moist, and your pulse is weak. This is followed by *heat syncope*: You are dizzy, pale, and sweaty, and your heart rate may be rapid.

Heat exhaustion comes next. Although your body temperature is still normal, your skin is cold and clammy; you are thirsty, not well-coordinated, nauseated. You may have a headache and feel dizzy. You must immediately be rehydrated with water, salt and minerals. If these symptoms persist even after you have cooled off, see a doctor.

Finally, there is *heat stroke*. If you have let matters go this far, you are in trouble. The body temperature is above 103°F, your skin is dry and flushed, your pulse is strong and rapid, your mental state is impaired, and you are on your way to a coma. You may die unless you are treated immediately.

If you see someone with these symptoms, call for an ambulance. While waiting, get the victim out of the heat, loosen or remove clothing, wrap the individual in wet towels or clothing and apply ice packs around the neck, the groin, and under the arms and knees (that is where blood flow is greatest).

But the key is prevention: Do not exercise in the heat, drink plenty of water (do not depend on your thirst to signal your need for fluids; it is not reliable) and eat lightly salted foods to replace the salt lost in perspiration. If you are indoors, make sure the ventilation is adequate.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Those most likely to become sick from hyperthermia are:

- ✚ Infants and children up to 4 years of age.
- ✚ Men and women over 65 who have a problem with their hearts, kidneys or lungs.
- ✚ Individuals who are overweight.
- ✚ Anyone who is taking diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers, antihistamines, or other medications that interfere with their ability to perspire.
- ✚ Anyone who overworks or exercises too much in the heat.
- ✚ People who are dehydrated or have poor circulation, so that extra blood can't reach the surface of the body quickly enough.

The information offered in this newsletter is to increase your awareness of health related conditions and situations and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

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Flying Hymenoptera (membrane – wings)



(Bees, Wasps, Hornets, Yellow Jackets)

Following is information that we have placed in our newsletters every three or more years. Now that it is summer and everything is in beautiful bloom, the bees are busy, so we thought this was worth sending out again.

Stings by hymenoptera (an order of insects with four membranous wings) have the potential to cause illness and even death. Approximately 250,000 species of hymenoptera are known. Generally they are aggressive only when threatened or when their hives are disrupted.

Honeybees and bumblebees have **barbed** stingers that become embedded after injecting their venom; they fly away and die from the stingers being torn from their bodies. These stingers release venom and the sooner the stinger is removed, the less venom is released.

Wasps and hornets have **unbarbed** stingers that do not become embedded, so they can give multiple stings.

Following are known effects from Stings:

- **Local irritation** – includes pain, itching, redness and swelling. These usually resolve within 24 hours. Local reactions can be extensive if an entire extremity is involved and the swelling and erythema may last for a week or longer.
- **Systemic reactions** – includes generalized and severe itching, nausea, and vomiting, bronchospasm and wheezing, tiredness, fever, conjunctivitis, runny nose, low blood pressure or anaphylactic shock. Systemic responses are highly variable.
- **Anaphylactic reactions** – are life threatening and may take from a few minutes to an hour after the sting to appear. The symptoms include swelling of the throat and bronchospasm, which is seen as difficulty speaking, tightness in the throat or chest, wheezing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and chest pain. Respiratory tract obstruction accounts for most of the deaths that occur. Some people may confuse this with a heart attack.

Following are recommended basics of care should a sting occur:

1. Evaluate the person's pulse and breathing.
2. Remove the stinger by gently flicking or scraping it out with the sharp edged object (a credit card works well). Do not try to remove the stinger by hand or with tweezers since this squeezes more venom into the victim's skin.
3. Cleanse the wound with soap and water. After cleansing, apply a cold compress or ice pack for 20-30 minutes.
4. Anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, Tylenol, or ibuprofen are helpful in reducing pain and swelling.

Sting Precautions:

- Avoid wearing colored clothing.
- Avoid using perfumes or other fragrances when outside.
- Avoid running about nearby bees.
- Avoid eating when bees are nearby.
- Avoid areas where bees and wasps are present.
- Avoid going barefoot in grassy areas.

LEG ACHES

From NIH News in Health – October 2008

If you are past age 50, you may have resigned yourself to feeling a few more aches these days. However, if you have had pain or cramping in your legs when you are walking that goes away when you stop, don't shrug it off. It might be an early warning signal of a serious and sometimes silent disorder called peripheral arterial disease (PAD).

Just like arteries in the heart, those in the lower legs can become clogged with fatty deposits. Imagine your arteries are a complex highway system. Fatty deposits, also known as plaque, are the traffic jams that limit blood flow. Clogged arteries – blood flow traffic jams – anywhere in the body increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Between 8 million and 12 million people over age 50 have PAD. Many never notice any symptoms, which include heaviness in your legs, awakening at night with pain in your lower legs, and pain or cramping in the legs when you are walking that seems to lessen with rest. A lot of people who have these symptoms don't tell their doctors. They simply accept the discomfort as part of growing older. Another sign of PAD that people may notice but dismiss is a change in the color of their feet.

Whether painful or silent, undiagnosed PAD is too dangerous to ignore. That is why NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute started a campaign to tell more people about the disorder, joining with 40 other organizations across the U.S. to raise awareness about PAD.

Those most at risk for PAD are people over age 50, especially African Americans. Smokers and former smokers, and people who have diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure are also at risk. Those who have had vascular disease, heart attack or stroke, or have a family history of those disorders should also be on the look out for PAD.

If you are over 50 or otherwise at risk, ask your doctor about being tested for PAD. A simple test called the ankle brachial index (ABI) can identify the problem. The ABI compares the blood pressure in your arm with blood pressure in your legs. Reduced blood flow in the legs could signal artery disease.

Once PAD is detected, your doctor will offer several treatment options to help clear out the blockages before they lead to more serious problems. Your doctor may tell you to get more exercise, if you do not have an active lifestyle. Recent results from a study of people with PAD showed that daily physical activity improves survival rates. Your doctor may also recommend changes to our diet and other efforts to lower high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Medications and surgery are also treatment options that can improve blood flow in the vessels.

What is most important is to take those aches seriously and seek help from your doctor.

Pennsylvania Cystic Fibrosis, Inc.(PACFI – see www.pacfi.org) and Olde Tyme Accessories presents

BURKE P. BEAR DAY

On Saturday, August 23, 2008, at the Susquehanna Valley Mall at Olde Tyme Accessories from 10 AM until 4 PM. This event will offer the following items to benefit PACFI:



- The 10th anniversary edition of Burke P. Bear, the World Ambassador of Love who has toured 44 states and 18 world countries to raise funds and to create an awareness of cystic fibrosis (CF).
- ***Burke's Tour***, an inspirational book about Burke's life and legacy written by Burke's Dad.
- "Up in Heaven," a one-song CD written and recorded by local artists to benefit PACFI.
- Raffle tickets for a 1969 Trans Am Convertible "Recreation" to benefit PACFI and The Matroom.
- Burke P. Bear prints by artist Candy Lloyd.
- Burke's Tour teddy tees (to fit the bear), adult T-shirts, sweatshirts, and fleeces (all with the Burke's Tour logo).

"Cure Cystic Fibrosis" ribbon magnets for cars.

How to Protect Yourself and Others from Electrical Hazards Following a Natural Disaster



After a hurricane, flood or other natural disaster you need to be careful to avoid electrical hazards both in your home and elsewhere.

- **Never** touch a fallen power line. Call the power company to report fallen power lines.
- Avoid contact with overhead power lines during cleanup and other activities.
- Do not drive through standing water if downed power lines are in the water.
- If a power line falls across your car while you are driving, stay inside the vehicle and continue to drive away from the line. If the engine stalls, do not turn off the ignition. Warn people not to touch the car or the line. Call or ask someone to call the local utility company and emergency services. Do not allow anyone other than emergency personnel to approach your vehicle.
- If electrical circuits and electrical equipment have gotten wet or are in or near water, turn off the power at the main breaker or fuse on the service panel. Do not enter standing water to access the main power switch. Call an electrician to turn it off.
- Never turn power on or off yourself or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water. Do not turn the power back on until electrical equipment has been inspected by a qualified electrician. All electrical equipment and appliances must be completely dry before returning them to service. Have a certified electrician check these items if there is any question.
- If you see frayed wiring or sparks when you restore power, or if there is an odor of something burning but no visible fire, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker.
- Consult your utility company about using electrical equipment, including power generators. Do not connect generators to your home's electrical circuits without the approved, automatic-interrupt devices. If a generator is on line when electrical service is restored, it can become a major fire hazard and it may endanger line workers helping to restore power in your area.

If you believe someone has been electrocuted take the following steps:

1. Look first. **Don't touch.** The person may still be in contact with the electrical source. Touching the person may pass the current through you.
2. Call or have someone else call 911 or emergency medical help.
3. Turn off the source of electricity if possible. If not, move the source away from you and the affected person using a nonconducting object made of cardboard, plastic or wood.
4. Once the person is free of the source of electricity, check the person's breathing and pulse. If either has stopped or seems dangerously slow or shallow, begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) immediately.
5. If the person is faint or pale or shows other signs of shock, lay him or her down with the head slightly lower than the trunk of the body and the legs elevated.
6. Don't touch burns, break blisters, or remove burned clothing. Electrical shock may cause burns inside the body, so be sure the person is taken to a doctor.

For more information, visit www.bt.edu/disaster/hurricanes