

# The Heat is On!



Summer weather is surely almost here, so this is a good time to prepare for the heat of summer.

## What Health Problems Can Be Caused By Heat?

- **Heat Rash:** Heat rash is also called prickly heat. This condition occurs in hot, humid conditions when perspiration doesn't evaporate, leaving the skin wet and the sweat ducts clogged.
- **Heat Cramps:** These muscle spasms can occur after heavy sweating and not drinking enough fluids.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Loss of body fluids and a drop in blood pressure leads to exhaustion. Symptoms include dizziness, clammy skin, and excessive sweating.

- **Heat Stroke:** Heat stroke can lead to coma and death. The body is no

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Shared Successes

The following are interesting progress notes from SafetyTeam members' activities:

- ITG reported a potential for injury when getting on and off the OHSU Shuttle Van. Logistics was asked why the bus isn't used more since it is easier to get in and out of. Logistics responded and noted that a ridership survey done in 12/04-12/05 showed that the majority of riders ride between the hours of 7 am and 10:30 am. To decrease the wear and tear and cost of operation of the bus, they decided to only use the bus during peak hours, and to use the van at other times. No injuries have been reported.
- Shrubs in front of Marquam II were tall, causing a security concern. The Grounds crew trimmed the shrubs!

*Thanks members... be safe!*



### Inside this Issue:

Safety Focus: Molds and Indoor Air Quality	2
Bike Safety	3
Question of the Month	4



## Topic of the Month

This month's specialized training topic is titled, "**Molds and Indoor Air Quality.**" This topic is presented to educate employees about the health hazards and prevention of molds in the work environment.

Molds are forms of fungi that are found everywhere - indoors and outdoors - all year round. Another common term for mold is mildew. Mold can sometimes be detected by a musty odor.

All molds need moisture to grow. Mold growth is encouraged by warm and humid conditions, although it can grow during cold weather also. It seems likely to grow and become a problem only where there is persistent water damage, high humidity, or dampness. Common sources of indoor moisture that can cause mold problems include flooding, roof and plumbing leaks, damp basement or crawl spaces, or anywhere moist air condenses on cold surfaces.

Most fungi, including molds, produce microscopic cells called "spores" that spread easily through the air. Live spores act like seeds, forming new mold growths (colonies) when they find the right conditions. All of us are exposed to fungal spores daily in the air we breathe.



Most people will have no reaction at all when exposed to molds. Allergic reactions, similar to common pollen or animal allergies, are the most common health effects for individuals sensitive to molds. Molds may also aggravate asthma. Fungal infections from building-associated molds may occur in people with serious immune disease but



this is very rare. Most symptoms are temporary and eliminated by correcting the mold problem. Molds may also cause nuisance odors.

For those who are affected by molds, there can be a wide variation in how they react. People who may be affected more severely and quickly than others include:

- infants and children.
- elderly people.
- pregnant women.
- individuals with respiratory conditions or allergies and asthma.
- persons with weakened immune systems (Ex: people with HIV infection, chemotherapy patients, organ or bone marrow transplant recipients, autoimmune diseases.)



Those with special health concerns should consult their doctor if they are concerned about mold exposure. The symptoms that may seem to occur from mold exposure can also be due to other causes such as bacterial or viral infections, or other allergies.



If you suspect mold in your work area, or conditions that might encourage mold growth, notify your supervisor. Environmental Health & Radiation Safety and Facilities Management can work to identify and correct any problems.

### Questions about Mold?

**Environmental Health & Radiation Safety can provide information and indoor air quality evaluations.**

**503 494-7795**

(Continued from page 1)

longer able to cool itself, and will stop sweating. The skin becomes hot, dry and red or blotchy. An affected person will become confused, delirious or unconscious.

### Who Is At Risk?

If your job requires that you work outdoors on very hot days, you may be at risk. Also, physical activities outside of work may also put you at risk.

### How do you protect yourself?



- **DRINK A LOT!** Avoid caffeine and alcohol as these dehydrate you.
- **TAKE BREAKS!** Take frequent breaks in cool, shady areas.

- **ADJUST:** Your body will adjust to high heat conditions, or acclimatize, after a period of time. This period varies from person to person.
- **CLOTHING:** Wear loose fitting, light colored clothing.
- **BE AWARE OF SYMPTOMS:** Being able to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and stroke can prevent serious injury!



### Bike Safety

As you venture out to ride your bike this summer, make sure that you follow these bike safety tips:

- Wear a bike helmet-always!
- Obey All Regulatory Signs and Traffic Lights and Never Ride Against Traffic-as if you were driving a car.
- Use Hand Signals- so traffic knows where you are going.
- Ride a Well-Equipped Bike- make sure it is tuned up and that the brakes work!
- Dress Appropriately-bright and reflective clothing are easier for motorists to see!



## Q of M Answer!

Last month's Question of the Month was from the Focus Topic, "**Stress At Work Part II.**"

The question was, "**Why are new employees more likely to be injured than more experienced employees?**"

The answer is : New employees are often younger and less experienced than more seasoned workers. They often lack the training necessary to perform all job functions safely and efficiently in new work areas. New employees may not be trained by someone who is qualified to train them and new employees often try to prove themselves by taking unnecessary risks.

Training can be provided by individual departments; or Environmental Health and Radiation Safety offers live sessions and online training in many subjects including proper lifting technique.

Thank you to each of you who participated! If you answered correctly, you earned 1 SafetyPoint! Contact Kristine Abrahamson at 503 494-0215 for answers to your questions.

### Did You Know...



**The OHSU Parking Office is now offering Bike Commuters an incentive for riding their bike to work: Free Parking!**

Every time you ride your bike to campus, ride through the OHSU Parking Information Booth, come to the OHSU Parking Office, or ride through our parking booth at the Casey Eye Institute. Your bike commuter card will be punched and you will be on your way. The best part is when your card is filled up, you will receive a credit toward the next month of parking...All for riding your bike! For more details, see:

<http://ozone.ohsu.edu/>



## Slow down in Construction Work Zones!

SAFETYNEWS

4

July 2005

### Question of the Month

The question of the Month is designed to challenge your safety knowledge and give you a chance to earn some cool, free stuff!

#### QUESTION OF THE MONTH



**Mold needs 2 main things in order to grow.  
What are they?**

Write your answer to the question in the appropriate box on your SafetyTeam Member Update form. Correct answers to this month's Question will earn 1 SafetyPoint.

If you are not currently a SafetyTeam member and would like to participate, contact Kristine Abrahamson, SafetyTeam Coordinator, at 503 494-7795.

# OHSU

OHSU includes four schools; two hospitals; numerous primary care and specialty clinics; multiple research institutes; and several public service and outreach units. OHSU is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

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