



February 1, 2017

February is American Heart Month

It's the perfect time to pause and reflect on our efforts to keep our own hearts healthy, ponder changes that will help us in that effort, and renew our commitment to the fight against heart disease. It's timely, because deaths related to cardiac events and disease are actually highest in the winter. Prevention.com places the increase in the range of 36%, compared to summer. Another source cites a figure above 50% Regardless of the numbers, it is clear that winter is harder on our hearts than any other time of the year.

We have always assumed that this rise was related in large part to cold exposure, and snow shoveling, and these causes are represented in the totals, but there are others that you may not have considered.

The unfortunate outcomes from shoveling snow are usually the result of individuals underestimating the level of exertion involved, and not being mindful of their risk factors. Anything that might cause difficulty in the summer, should be considered an elevated risk in the winter, because we are working harder to keep our bodies warm, and to navigate unfriendly terrain while staying on our feet. Our bodies are busy doing more than we realize.

Our personal and family medical history should always inform how we move through things, but again, during times when environmental factors are already taxing our bodies in other ways, things like blood pressure, weight, diabetes, and existing cardio-vascular conditions, can require a little extra attention and care. Keep in mind that in general, we are wired to be naturally less active during the winter months. All of these factors can combine to create a situation of us pushing ourselves harder physically, than we may be aware.

Stay hydrated. We are still losing water from our bodies all the time, even if it doesn't feel like it. Proper hydration is good for overall health regardless. Avoid overuse of alcohol. More than anything it dehydrates a body, but it also can give a false sense of warming when consumed in cold weather. Vitamin D deficiency and seasonal affective disorder (SAD) are conditions that are caused by decreased exposure to natural sunlight during the shorter, cloudier days. They can present with physical, as well as psychological symptoms, like depression.

Winter is the season for flu and respiratory infections. Stay at home if you are sick, and protect yourself from both contracting and spreading infections. Be courteous of others when coughing or sneezing, and wash your hands often.

Stress is another factor that can impact heart health. The studies referenced earlier place this spike in cardiac incidents between December and March, with the peak being right around the holidays. Consider what else is going on during this time: Shopping, travel, and financial challenges... Interacting with family and friends that you don't see any other time of the year, and managing complex holiday schedules. Everyone is on vacation, so time and bandwidth to get things done at work can be in short supply, and commuting and other normal activities take more time and energy.

Winter is supposed to be a time of rest and renewal, so take your time, remember to care for your heart, and be well.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Monthly Occupational Safety Training

Location: Boise State University, Pioneer Hall 102

Date: February 15, 2017 - 2-3 p.m.

Subject TBD.

FROM THE INTERNET



[Tips for preventing the flu](#)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

SAFETY BRAIN TEASER

What's wrong with this picture?



Last month's teaser: Poor general housekeeping; clutter, trip hazards, bottles tipped, and precariously perched on shelves. Light diffuser is missing, water damage is present near the light. Appliances are plugged into extension cords. The technician is wearing no PPE, and demonstrating poor ergonomics/lifting technique. Makeshift cart, with unstable loading, trash bag is a trip/snag hazard, mop bucket is missing a caster. Fire door is blocked.

MANAGER'S CORNER

LOSS PREVENTION SELF-ASSESSMENT

BEFORE BEGINNING ANY ACTIVITY/TASK/JOB, AFTER A LOSS OR NEAR LOSS, ANY UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES:



ASSESS the risk!

What could go wrong?

What is the worst thing that could happen if something does go wrong?

ANALYZE how to reduce the risk!

Do I have all the necessary Training and Knowledge to do this job properly?

Do I have all the proper Tools and Personal Protective Equipment?

ACT to ensure loss-free operations!

Take necessary Action to ensure the job is done properly!

Follow written procedures! Ask for assistance, if needed!

DO NOT PROCEED UNLESS ALL RISKS HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED!

For Everyone • Every Day • All the Time

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS...

Please feel free to contact us to provide feedback on the content of this newsletter, or to suggest topics that you would like to see addressed, or inquire about training you wish to participate in.

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Occupational Safety

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