

Smart Living

for a healthy workplace

Vol. 2, N° 2 • August 2010



Stress and Mental Health in the Workplace

About one in ten people in the workplace are coping with a mental illness- a mood or anxiety disorder or substance abuse problem, and one in five will experience it during their lifetime according to the 2002 Statistics Canada Mental Health and Well-being survey.¹

The economic impact of Canadian work-related mental health problems was estimated at \$14.4 billion annually in a 2001 study.² The impact of mental illness on the workplace comes from both lost productivity and disability claims. A 2003 study estimated that mental illness accounted for 30% of disability claims and 70% of total costs - \$15 billion and \$33 billion annually.¹

Working conditions can be a major contributor to stress in the workplace. One in three adults report their work to be "quite a bit to extremely stressful" according to the Statistics Canada Survey.¹ Stress can precipitate an episode of mental illness for those who are predisposed to it, and can contribute to many common physical health problems. One study in 2001 found that stress-related absenteeism costs Canadian employers approximately \$3.2 billion dollars annually.³

The costs from stress and mental illness are too high – both personally and financially to the individual and to the workplace. So how can Canadian workplaces be healthier? For the answer, see our next issue of Smart Living Vol. 2, N°3 December 2010.

1 The Public Health Agency of Canada. "The human face of mental health and mental illness in Canada 2006." http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publiat/human-humain06/pdf/human_face_e.pdf (24 August 2010).

2 Stephens, T., N. Joubert. *The economic burden of mental health problems in Canada. Chronic Diseases in Canada*, 22(1), 18-23 (2003).

3 Duxbury, Linda, and C. Higgins. "Work-life balance in the new millennium: Where do we start? Where do we need to go?" Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN), document no. W/12 (2001).

Canada's Healthy Workplace Month: October 4 - October 31, 2010

Participate and enjoy the 2010 Canada's Healthy Workplace Month starting October 4th to October 31st, 2010.

The theme is:

"Healthy Mind - Healthy Body -
Healthy Workplace:
A Positive Workplace Works."

The weekly themes are:

Week One:

Being a Positive Workplace!

Week Two:

Being Positive About
Workplace and Friends!

Week Three:

Being Positive About
Life/Work Harmony!

Week Four:

Being Positive About
Community!



To learn more about being healthy and participate in Canada's Healthy Workplace Month's events and activities, please visit the Canada's Healthy Workplace Month website at:

<http://www.healthyworkplacemonth.ca>

For more information on workplace health, please visit:

<http://www.healthunit.org/workplace>

**SUBSCRIBE
for FREE**

If you would like to receive the *Smart Living* workplace newsletter either in hard copy or by email, please contact Lynda Earl at 1-613- 345- 5685 ext. 2215 or email: lynda.earl@healthunit.org



Easy Ways to Make *FROZEN* Vegetables & Fruit

Local produce can be a tasty addition to your meals and snacks. You can try freezing locally grown vegetables and fruit so you can enjoy them all year round.

Freezing vegetables

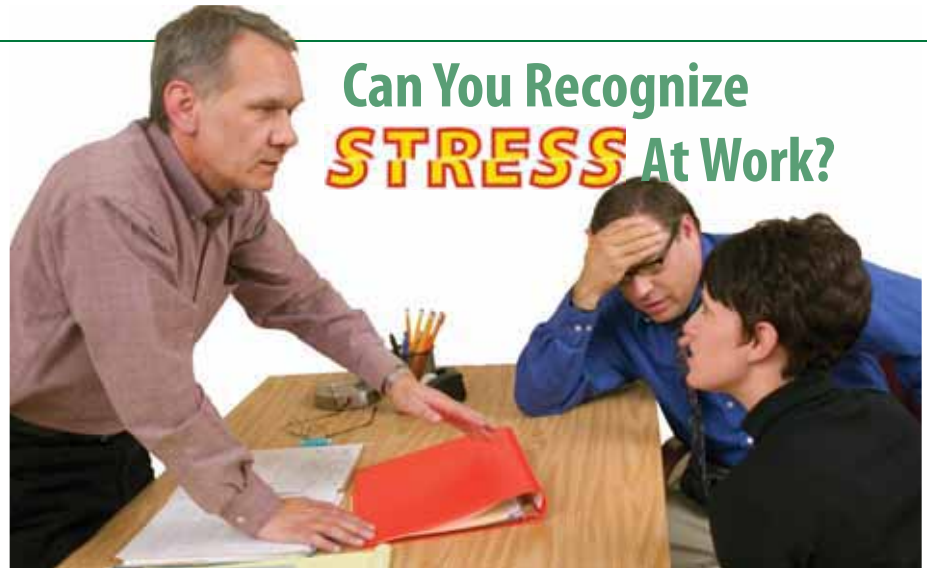
Some vegetables such as asparagus, green beans, broccoli, carrots and cauliflower may require blanching before freezing. Blanching is a method where foods are partially cooked to preserve their color, texture, and flavor.

Blanching is simple: cook your vegetables in boiling water for two (2) to three (3) minutes, and then submerge them in a bowl of cold water to stop the cooking process. Different vegetables may require different blanching times. You can store your blanched vegetables in a freezer bag or container up to six (6) months. For ideas on cooking with your vegetables, visit Foodland Ontario at: <http://www.foodland.gov.on.ca/>

Freezing fruit

You can freeze blueberries, peaches, raspberries, strawberries, apples, and rhubarb when ripe and in season.

Fruit does not require blanching before freezing. Some fruit might turn brown during freezing. You can reduce the browning by dipping these fruit in one-third (1/3) cup of lemon juice mixed with four (4) cups of water. It is not necessary to add sugar to fruit when freezing. Fruit can be frozen up to six (6) months when stored in a tightly sealed bag or container, just enough time to get you through to the next harvest.



Can You Recognize **STRESS** At Work?

Prolonged, unrelieved stress does cause physical, psychological, and behavioural health problems. However, when workplace stress is recognized, your healthy workplace committee can initiate creative supportive workplace policies and environments to address your stress at work. Can you recognize a stressed individual at work? Here is a list of physical, psychological, and behavioural reactions caused by stress at work:

Physical

- Migraines
- Sleep disorders
- Muscular tension
- Excess weight loss or excess weight gain
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Increased blood pressure
- Allergies
- Increased cholesterol rate
- Dermatological disorders

Psychological

- Depression
- Discouragement
- Boredom
- Anxiety
- Memory Loss
- Dissatisfaction
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Pessimism

Behavioural

- Absenteeism
- Drug abuse or dependency
- Excessive consumption of medicine
- Sexual disorders
- Impatience
- Aggressiveness
- Eating disorders
- Diminished creativity and initiative
- Interpersonal relationship problems
- Frequent mood swings
- Superficial relationships
- Lower tolerance of frustration
- Disinterest
- Isolation

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.cgsst.com>

*A Series -
Booklet 1: Mental Health at Work ... From Defining
to Solving the Problem. The Chair in Occupational
Health and Safety Management, University of Laval,
Quebec, Canada. Booklet 1, page 7. ISBN 2-9807808-
3-9. Legal deposit - National Library of Canada, 2005.*

Are you a woman? Are you concerned about your health?

Cancer of the cervix can be prevented with regular Pap tests.

Call your doctor or nurse practitioner to book your Pap test — it could save your life!



No Doctor or Nurse Practitioner?

Call to book a FREE Pap test with a female nurse practitioner.

Check our website for Fall clinic dates, locations & time.

www.healthunit.org/cancer/cervical/cancer_cervical.htm

Prepare for this Flu Season

Once again, this fall the annual seasonal influenza (flu) vaccine is being offered free to everyone in Ontario, six months of age and older. This year's seasonal vaccine will contain protection from the pandemic H1N1 virus that occurred in the spring and fall 2009 as well as two other strains of influenza. Influenza immunization is recommended whether or not people received the H1N1 vaccine last year because protection from influenza vaccine usually lasts less than one year.

Certain high risk groups continue to need protection from influenza. These high risk groups include persons age 65 or older, adults and children with chronic diseases, such as heart, lung, cancer and diabetes, anyone who lives, works or volunteers in a Long Term Care Home or health care setting, household contacts of persons with an increased risk of complications from the Influenza, pregnant women, and households expecting a newborn during influenza season.

Flu shots can be obtained through flu clinics available in many communities or by contacting your Health Care Provider. For more information, contact the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or go to: www.healthunit.org

Flu Clinic dates & locations will be posted at www.healthunit.org/clinics/flu.htm by the end of September 2010.



Men: Some smart advice on staying healthy



Lifestyle: Be a non-smoker and avoid second-hand smoke, limit your alcohol consumption, eat healthy foods, be active on a regular basis and be sensible in the sun.

Screening: Perform a testicular self-exam regularly and check your skin monthly.

Talk to your doc: Discuss any family history of cancer; after age 50, ask about colorectal screening and the benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening.



The Canadian Cancer Society has plenty of information to help you stay healthy, including our *Seven Steps to Health* that can help reduce your risk of developing cancer.



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer

Let's Make Cancer History

For more information, please contact your local Society office, call 1 888 939-3333 or visit www.cancer.ca.

Hello from LGLDHU Medical Officer of Health!

I am very pleased to be joining the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit as the Medical Officer of Health. Previously I have been an Associate Medical Officer of Health



Paula Stewart, MD, FRCPC

at the Ottawa Public Health Department, a community health consultant, and most recently Director of Chronic Disease Surveillance at the Public Health Agency of Canada. But local public health has always been my passion, and I am thrilled to be returning to this work. I live on a hobby farm with horses near Perth, and am looking forward to working in the community in which my family and I live.

Most of the adults in our community between the ages 20 and 60 spend about one-third of their day in the workplace five days per week. In addition, many teens and seniors have part-time jobs. So it is critical for our community that our workplaces are healthy places. Education on a healthy lifestyle combined with a supportive environment and healthy policies can make a difference in the health of workers. Healthy workers are more productive and take less sick time — critical factors for productivity.

I look forward to working with you on promoting workplace health. Together we can accomplish much!

— Paula Stewart, MD, FRCPC

Animal Bites Are Preventable

Each year the Health Unit responds to hundreds of animal bites. Along with the pain and possible emotional and physical scarring caused by a bite is the risk of exposure to rabies.



These simple tips may help prevent an animal bite:

- Stay away from wild, stray, or unknown animals.
- Never leave small children unattended in the presence of an animal.
- Don't disturb an animal that is eating, sleeping, caring for its young, or is exhibiting signs of illness.
- Be a responsible pet owner, vaccinate your pet against rabies, keep them under your control when out in public spaces, and fence your yard.
- Avoid running past a dog as they like to chase things.
- Never reach through a fence, or enter a home unannounced as dogs may be protective of their territory and may feel you are a threat.
- If threatened by a dog, avoid eye contact, speak firmly, stay still until the dog leaves, or back away, don't turn and run.
- If you are knocked down, curl up in a ball, and cover your head and neck.
- If you are bitten, clean the wound, try to determine who the owner of the animal is, seek medical attention, and report the bite to the Health Unit.
- For further information on dog bites, please visit these websites at: www.avma.org and www.cdc.gov

BE AWARE of WILD PARSNIP

Be aware when working or walking in rural areas, that the presence of a weed commonly known as the wild parsnip is on the rise. This weed is difficult to control and is often found growing in ditches and open fields.



Photo credit:
http://www.ppws.vt.edu/scott/weed_id/pavsa.htm

When human skin is exposed to the plant juices in the leaves, stems, and roots, a severe skin irritation may occur. You may also be exposed if you have contact with pets that have walked through areas infested with the weed. In mild cases, the skin may turn red and feel sunburned; however, in some individuals the redness may increase and painful blisters may develop after exposure to the sun. Blisters may form up to a couple of days following exposure to the sun, and when the blisters rupture, the skin may be discolored and scarred.

Wild parsnip can be controlled by mowing, digging it up, or by pulling. **Protective gear must be used when attempting to remove any wild parsnips.** For more information, please check the Health Unit website at: www.healthunit.org Wild parsnip information may be found under the **health hazard** topic area.

<http://www.healthunit.org/hazards/wildparsnip.html>

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY DOGS & CATS MUST be vaccinated



RABIES VACCINATION CLINICS

WEDNESDAY, September 8, 2010 2:00 – 6:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, September 15, 2010 2:00 – 6:00 pm

FEE: \$20 (HST included) PER ANIMAL

CASH ONLY

Dogs & Cats must be on a leash or in a carrier.

For locations of clinics, visit our website:

www.healthunit.org

or call the Health ACTION Line at:

1-800-660-5853