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What Is Occupational Asthma?

Our jobs can sometimes bring us into contact with substances that can cause asthma to flare up. Occupational asthma is caused by inhaling fumes, gases, dust or other potentially harmful substances while on the job.

If you're exposed to any of these substances at high concentrations, you may begin wheezing and experiencing other asthma symptoms immediately after exposure. Often, asthma symptoms are worse during days or nights you work, improve when you have time off, and start again when you go back to work.

If you already have asthma, it may be worsened by being exposed to certain substances at work. Workers who already have asthma or some other respiratory disorder may also experience an increase in their symptoms during exposure to these irritants. The medical

term for pre-existing asthma worsened by workplace conditions is "work-exacerbated asthma."

If you think you may have occupational asthma, or if your asthma is not under control, seeing an allergist can help.

— Source: American Academy of Allergies, Asthma & Immunology



Caring for you and about you



Calcium

Can You Get Enough If You're Lactose Intolerant?

You've heard for years about the importance of getting enough calcium in your diet. But what if you're lactose intolerant? Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to get enough calcium while also avoiding lactose. Incorporate non-dairy calcium sources into your diet, such as fortified soy milk, fortified orange juice, tofu processed with calcium, canned salmon and almonds. Drink lactose-free milk or take lactase enzyme supplements. Try cheeses such as cheddar and Swiss, which are low in lactose.

If you can't get enough calcium from food, you may need a calcium supplement. Talk to your healthcare provider or a registered dietitian for more information.

— Source: *University of Virginia*

Fingernail Care

Do's and Don'ts for Healthier Nails

To keep your fingernails looking their best:

- **Keep fingernails dry and clean.** This prevents bacteria from growing under your fingernails. Repeated or prolonged contact with water can contribute to split fingernails. Wear cotton-lined rubber gloves when washing dishes, cleaning or using harsh chemicals.
- **Practice good nail hygiene.** Use a sharp manicure scissors or clippers. Trim your nails straight across, then round the tips in a gentle curve.
- **Use moisturizer.** When you use hand lotion, rub the lotion into your fingernails and cuticles, too.
- **Apply a protective layer.** Applying a nail hardener might help strengthen nails.
- **Ask your doctor about biotin.** Some research suggests that the nutritional supplement biotin might help strengthen weak or brittle fingernails.

— Source: *Mayo Clinic*



Dental Health — *How Important Is Flossing?*

Is flossing *really* all that important? Yes! When you floss, you are cleaning the areas of the teeth that a toothbrush cannot access. Left on its own, plaque bacterial biofilm organizes and changes the environment in your mouth so that nastier bugs can survive. Once those bad boys get on the scene, you are at risk of developing infection, and possibly disease of the structures that support your teeth in your mouth.

By flossing, you disorganize the bacterial plaque biofilm, and you are doing so in the most vulnerable area of your mouth. The tissue is more likely to become diseased between the teeth.

The most likely outcome of not flossing is a gum infection (gingivitis) that may lead to gum disease (periodontitis), which can eventually cause tooth loss. The catch is that the initial signs of gum infection can be easy to ignore. Early on, the gums are a bit tender, red, and may bleed when brushing or flossing.

By flossing regularly, you also remove smelly plaque bacteria from more of your mouth than brushing alone removes, leading to fresher breath. It has also been shown to add years to your life!

— Source: *University of California, San Francisco Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery*

Healthy Skin

Taking Care of Our Skin As We Age

Older adults are at increased risk for pressure ulcers on the skin because their circulation is poorer, their skin is thinner and drier, and there is less fatty tissue to cushion it. Older skin is easily injured and slower to heal. If a pressure site or injury is not properly treated, death of cells can lead to ulceration.

Skin may look normal, even when tissue underneath has died. It may take a week before tissue damage is noticed. A common warning sign of skin breakdown is any area that remains reddened for more than an hour. Do not massage the skin if it is reddened. Rubbing increases tissue damage and makes skin pinker, redder or warmer. For dark skin, appearance is mahogany or blue-brown in color and shiny. Consult a healthcare professional if you discover a pressure-sore area or observe any unusual appearance of the skin.

— Source: Oregon Department of Human Services



DID YOU KNOW?

Walk Off the Weight — and Make It Fun!

Want to walk more for weight loss and better health? Try walking different routes in your neighborhood or mixing in a hill or two with flatter terrain. Vary your pace. Walk at a more casual or moderate pace for a couple of blocks, then increase your pace (power walk or speed walk) for a block. Walking with a friend is a good way to combine social time with exercise. Some people enjoy walking with music. Some music is geared more for exercise with energizing tunes and a beat or tempo suitable for walking. Be sure to remain aware of traffic and your surroundings. Keep track of your time and distance walked each day. Keeping a daily log tracks your progress and keeps you motivated.

— Source: American College of Sports Medicine



Let's Talk about Gas

Everybody Has It.

What Foods Cause It?

According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, most foods that contain carbohydrates can cause gas. Foods that most often cause gas include:

- **Raffinose.** A complex sugar found in beans, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, asparagus, other vegetables and whole grains.
- **Lactose.** A natural sugar found in milk and milk products, such as cheese and ice cream; and in processed foods such as bread, cereal and salad dressing.
- **Fructose.** A sugar found in onions, artichokes, pears and wheat. Fructose is also used as a sweetener in some soft drinks and fruit drinks.
- **Sorbitol.** A sugar found naturally in fruits, including apples, pears, peaches and prunes. Sorbitol is also used as an artificial sweetener in many dietetic foods and sugar-free candies and gums.
- **Starches.** Most starches, including potatoes, corn, noodles and wheat produce gas as they are broken down in the large intestine. (Rice is the only starch that does not cause gas.)
- **Soluble fiber.** Fiber that dissolves easily in water, and takes on a soft, gel-like texture in the intestines, is found in oat bran, beans, peas and most fruits.

There are treatments that can help prevent gas if taken before the meal (e.g., Beano), and those that can help with gas once you have it (simethicone), so you can continue to enjoy these healthy foods.

— Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases



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PROTECT YOUR CHILD'S FEET

It Starts with Choosing the Right Shoes

Shoe shopping with your child probably sounds like a simple task. But several important factors should be considered, according to the American Podiatric Medical Association.

- **Children's feet change with age.** Shoe sizes may change fairly quickly as a child's feet grow, especially during a growth spurt.
- **Shoes that don't fit properly can aggravate the feet.** Always measure a child's feet before buying shoes, and watch for signs of irritation.
- **Examine the heels.** Children may wear through the heels of shoes more quickly than they outgrow the shoes themselves. Uneven heel wear can indicate a foot problem that should be checked by a podiatrist.
- **Always buy for the larger foot.** Feet are seldom precisely the same size.
- **Buy shoes that do not need a "break-in" period.** Shoes should be comfortable immediately. Also make sure to have your child try on shoes with socks or tights, if that's how they'll be worn.

— Source: American Podiatric Medical Association

Pharmacy Update What Are "Behind the Counter" Drugs?

"Behind the counter" medications fall into a regulatory limbo between prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications. These drugs must be requested at the pharmacy counter, but they don't require a physician's prescription before they may be purchased.

The reasoning behind creating this "in-between" category between a prescription and something you can pick up freely on the pharmacy shelves? To limit the drug's use by those who might misuse it (as with pseudoephedrine, which can be used in the production of illegal drugs) while maintaining reasonable access for legitimate use by patients without requiring a prescription.

— Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

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