



## Lead Story

# How dangerous is liquid nitrogen?

Liquid nitrogen, which has a boiling point of  $-196^{\circ}\text{C}$ , is used for many things due to its ability to produce very low temperatures. It is used as a coolant for computers, in medicine to remove unwanted skin, warts and pre-cancerous cells, and in cryogenics, where scientists study the effect of very cold temperatures on materials.

And now, thanks to the innovation of a few internationally renowned chefs, it has become increasingly common at top restaurants as a method for instantly freezing food and drinks, or creating an impressive cloud of vapour or fog when exposed to air.

Before chefs took this cryogen into the kitchen, liquid nitrogen was tucked away in laboratories and usually came with a lengthy sheet of safety precautions like this:

- Wear clean and dry clothing that covers arms and legs.
- Clothing should be loose, so it is easy to remove it when an accident happens.
- Avoid wearing open trouser pockets and wrapped sleeves.
- Wear cryogenic gloves under the sleeves so no liquid can fall in the gloves.
- Wear safety glasses and facial protection.
- Wear non-slip closed footwear and apron.

But since its arrival into the culinary world, a quick search on the internet will find you all kinds of recipes that use liquid nitrogen such as nitro-caramel popcorn and pumpkin pie ice cream, among others. This could lull many people into thinking that liquid nitrogen is “fun” to use and should be experimented with to create amazing effects with food and drink to



impress your dinner guests.

The fact is liquid nitrogen is dangerous if not handled properly. It can cause frostbite or cryogenic burns and if used or spilled in a confined space, liquid nitrogen - which is colourless, odourless and tasteless - can kill you.

This is because liquid nitrogen has a large expansion ratio on evaporation - one litre of liquid nitrogen can result in about 700 litres of gas - so only a small volume of liquid nitrogen has to evaporate within a room to result in an oxygen deficient atmosphere. If there is not enough oxygen in the air, you can't breathe.

While many kitchens are not considered a confined space, it is better to be aware than to think that nothing can happen if a large amount of liquid nitrogen is spilled accidentally.

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Avoid pinch points

## M a k i n g H e a d l i n e s

# Could “the astronaut workout” be the next training trend?

(NC) On Earth, it could already be the next workout craze. Months after his videos of science experiments and everyday tasks such as shaving, brushing teeth and making a sandwich in space took off, Chris Hadfield’s YouTube clips about health and exercise have quietly gained their own devoted fan following.

From pumping iron and running to simply sleeping, Hadfield’s workout videos have gotten more than 3.6 million views on the Canadian Space Agency’s YouTube channel.

Not only are people watching with interest as astronauts exercise, some are even copying those space voyagers’ training routines. To date, over 24,000 people have participated in NASA astronaut Mike Hopkins’ “Train like an astronaut” program.

So why work-out like a space cadet? For one thing, astronauts train as if their lives depend on it: To stay alert and useful during the strains of



launch, re-entry and spacewalks, career astronauts need to be in good physical shape.

They also need to exercise just to keep their muscles and bones from shrinking. Without having to ‘fight’ against gravity, humans can lose 1-2 percent of their bone mass every month.

“From the moment you get into space, you are literally peeing out

your skeleton,” Hadfield has said, of the accelerated bone-loss that happens on modern space missions.

To help make-up for this, astronauts on the International Space Station are required to exercise two hours a day. During their workout, the ISS crew have their choice of a stationary bike, a micro-g treadmill, or a one-of-a-kind resistance machine that simulates training with weights.

And astronauts don’t just flop on the couch when they’re not in space. A typical training day to prepare for a mission might involve a jog, work with a medicine ball, pull-ups, box jumps, and a series of sprints.

While it’s not a program you can buy on DVD or Blu-ray (yet) training like an astronaut could be an Earthly new way to shoot for the stars.

For more on how astronauts exercise: [www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/astronauts/living-exercising.asp](http://www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/astronauts/living-exercising.asp)

# Drivers are reminded to adjust the headrest

(NC)—While buckling seatbelts is second nature when getting into a car – how many of us think to adjust the headrest? Reports show that headrests are one of the most overlooked safety features in motor vehicles today and many of us don’t realize the important role they play in preventing neck, brain and spinal cord related injuries.

Headrests are designed to work alongside the seatbelt so that when an accident occurs it prevents the head from twisting backwards, causing whiplash.

Drivers can sustain an injury from an incorrectly adjusted headrest even at speeds as low as 15 kilometres per hour – the same speed as the average bicycle.



According to an Insurance Bureau of Canada study, only 14 percent of drivers on the road have their headrest in the proper position. And the fact that whiplash is the most common soft tissue

injury incurred during auto collisions underlines the importance of adjusting each passenger’s headrest properly.

Consider following three simple steps in order to prevent injuries associated with improper headrest position:

1. Align the top of the headrest with the top of your head.
2. Position the centre of your headrest so that it is slightly above the top of the ear.
3. Ensure that the distance between the headrest and the back of the head is between five and 10 centimetres.

If you’re a family with multiple drivers, always make a specific point of adjusting the headrest before starting the ignition.

The information presented in Comfort Zone has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable. However, it cannot be assumed that all acceptable measures are contained in this article nor that additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional circumstances, or your own company procedures, or by federal, state/provincial and local law. Local, state/provincial and federal regulations take precedence over this material. We reserve the

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## M a k i n g   H e a d l i n e s

### How dangerous is liquid nitrogen?

*continued from page 1*

Liquid nitrogen has to be stored in special insulated vacuum-pressure containers as pressure can build up in a sealed container due to the boil-off of nitrogen gas.

It is simply not something you can pick up at the grocery store. This should also be a warning sign.

In the hands of trained professionals, liquid nitrogen can provide all sorts of dramatic effects on food, but to the untrained home cook, it is not something to dabble in unless you are aware of the risks and take precautions.

While it is to be expected that no one would drink boiling water or oil, or pour it over themselves or stick their hand in a deep fat fryer, liquid nitrogen should be treated with the same caution.

For example, contrary to the popular YouTube video which shows a professional dipping his hand in liquid nitrogen and

nothing happens, dipping your finger in this cryogen, if done incorrectly, could cause it to go rock solid and fall off.

It is also essential that all the liquid has evaporated before any food or drink that has been prepared with liquid nitrogen is used.

If more than a “trivial” amount of liquid nitrogen is swallowed, the result can be horrendous.

If someone were to drink more than a few drops of liquid nitrogen, certainly a teaspoon, it would freeze, and become solid and brittle like glass. Imagine if that happened in your stomach.

Using liquid nitrogen could cause serious injury by severe freeze-burns, especially if it splashes in your eyes or you get some on your skin.

In other words, don't treat liquid nitrogen lightly. Leave it to the professionals.

### Indoor air quality an important issue

(NC) Clean air is essential for good health. As Canadians, we spend close to 90% of our time inside, so the quality of our indoor air is particularly important.

If you're cleaning or tackling a home improvement project, you may be using products that contain chemicals that can be released into the air, such as cleaning products, paints and varnishes or glue.

Good ventilation is very important whenever you are using products containing chemical substances, especially if they are labelled with warning symbols.

Here are a few tips for safe and effective cleaning:

- Remember to bring in fresh air whenever possible. This will help reduce pollutants that can

accumulate to levels that might pose health and comfort problems.

- Clean regularly to eliminate dust and dirt. Breathing in dust can create breathing problems or worsen an existing respiratory condition.

- Use kitchen and bathroom fans vented outside to help remove pollutants directly from the rooms where they are created.

- Consider installing an air exchange unit. Remember to change the filters regularly, as recommended by the manufacturer.

- To keep homes safe and healthy for ourselves, families and visitors, it's important to try to identify and reduce hazards from the indoor air we breathe.

### Crossing accidents – preventable tragedies

(NC) Any accident has the potential to be a tragedy. But preventable accidents are true tragedies, and virtually all rail crossing accidents can be prevented.

Crossing accidents represented one of the most serious types of rail incidents in 2013, with 20 percent of these accidents resulting in either serious or fatal injuries. These tragedies can be prevented simply by obeying the crossing protection that is in place. Trains cannot stop quickly and they cannot swerve to avoid a collision.

There were 188 crossing accidents in Canada in 2013, consistent with the average of the past five years. 23 of these resulted in fatalities, again on par with the average of the past 5 years. In total, 31 people were fatally injured in these accidents, higher than the five-year average of 25 fatalities per year. Surprisingly, 42 percent of crossing fatalities last year were pedestrians – 13 fatalities.

Despite the presence of protective devices, most crossing accidents occur at automated public crossings protected by bells, lights and sometimes crossing arms. Non-automated crossings are protected by warning signs that alert motorists that they are approaching a railway track, and that a train may approach the crossing at any time.

“Disobeying railway crossing signals is dangerous and illegal,” said CN Police Chief Stephen Covey. “We will not tolerate that individuals put their lives and those of others at risk. Through a combination of education and enforcement, CN Police aim to change attitudes and behaviours towards rail crossing safety.”

CN Police work year-round to reduce crossing accidents by educating motorists about crossing safety, and enforcing provincial highway traffic laws regarding crossing safety across our network. In 2014, CN Police will be attending hundreds of crossings across Canada, handing out information on crossing safety and ticketing any transgressors they encounter.

For more information about CN's safety initiatives please visit [www.cn.ca](http://www.cn.ca)

## CFL bulb safety

(NC) In Canada, as of January 1, 2014, incandescent light bulbs are being phased out. There are a few options available to replace them, including compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL), light-emitting diodes (LED) and incandescent halogen light bulbs. You may be wondering why the phase-out was introduced and what this change means for you. Perhaps you have heard that CFLs contain mercury and you are worried about possible health effects.

The new efficiency standards for light bulbs were implemented to help Canadians save money and reduce greenhouse gases. Old-style incandescent bulbs lose about 90 percent of their energy as heat and only last about 1,000 hours. CFLs use energy more efficiently and can last 10,000 hours while LEDs last up to 25,000 hours.

Here are some tips from Health Canada on using CFL bulbs safely:

- Always handle them carefully.
- If you have skin sensitivities to UV, or an autoimmune disease that makes you sensitive to UV, buy low UV CFL bulbs and try to place the bulbs in fixtures where you can be 30 centimetres or more away from them.
- The presence of mercury in a CFL does not pose a risk to your health, unless the bulb is broken. If you do break a CFL:
  - Ensure that people and pets move to another room during the clean-up process.
  - Ventilate the room for at least 15 minutes prior to starting clean-up by opening windows and doors to the outdoors. This will ensure that mercury vapour levels are reduced before you start cleaning.
  - Do not use a vacuum to clean up the initial breakage as it will spread the mercury vapour and dust throughout the area and may contaminate the vacuum.
  - Wear disposable gloves to avoid direct contact with mercury and to prevent cuts.
  - Scoop or sweep up the broken pieces and debris with two pieces of stiff paper or cardboard. Do not use a broom. Use sticky tape, such as duct tape or masking tape, to pick up any remaining fine glass or powder.
  - Wipe the area with a damp paper towel, cloth or disposable wet wipe to remove any residual particles.
  - Place the broken glass and clean-up materials in a glass container with a tight fitting lid to further minimize the release of mercury vapour.
  - Check with your local municipality for CFL disposal information.

## Working Safely

# Know the dangers of dehydration

BY BRYDEN WINSBY  
FOR COMFORT ZONE

Dehydration — losing more fluid than you take in — can be a serious problem in both outdoor and indoor work environments.

Although dehydration often is associated with high temperatures and strenuous exercise, there are other causes, mostly from health problems, including severe diarrhea, fever and chronic diseases such as diabetes.

Working at high altitudes (generally defined as above 2,500 meters or about 8,200 feet) also can cause dehydration. It occurs when the body tries to adjust to the altitude through increased urination and rapid breathing to maintain adequate oxygen levels in the blood. The faster you breathe, the more water vapor you exhale.

Heat and high humidity can be a particularly risky combination. Sweat can't evaporate and cool a person as quickly as it normally does. This can lead to an increased body temperature and the need for more fluids.

Dehydration can lead to serious complications, including:

- Heat injury, ranging in severity from mild heat cramps to heat exhaustion to potentially life-threatening heat stroke.
- Swelling of the brain, when getting fluids again after being dehydrated, the body sometimes tries to pull too much water back into its cells, causing some cells to swell and rupture, which can be especially dangerous when brain cells are affected.
- Seizures, when electrolytes that help carry electrical signals from cell to cell are out of balance, the signals can become mixed up. This can lead to involuntary muscle contractions and sometimes to a loss of consciousness.
- Low blood volume shock, a potentially life-threatening complication of dehydration, occurs when low blood volume causes a drop in blood pressure and in the amount of oxygen in the body.
- Kidney failure, also potentially life-threatening, occurs when the kidneys are no longer able to remove

excess fluids and waste from the blood.

When not treated promptly and appropriately, severe dehydration can be fatal.

Dehydration can be described as mild, moderate or severe. A good way to determine hydration level is to monitor your urine color. It should be clear to light yellow. If it is darker or concentrated, you may be dehydrated and you must drink more fluids.

Here are typical signs of mild to moderate dehydration:

- Excessive thirst.
- Dizziness or light-headedness.
- Headache.
- Fatigue or drowsiness.
- Dry mouth, lips and eyes.
- Urinating only small amounts, less than three or four times a day.

Severe dehydration is a medical emergency. Watch for these symptoms:

- Dry, wrinkled skin that falls slowly into position when pinched up.
- Inability to urinate or not urinating for eight hours.
- Feeling drowsy, disoriented and irritated.
- Sunken eyes.
- Weak pulse.
- Rapid heartbeat.
- Cool hands and feet.
- Seizures.
- Blood in feces or vomit.

To ward off dehydration, experts advise making water your beverage of choice. Sports drinks should be taken in moderation because salts and minerals in them can interfere with the body's absorption of water.

The recommended daily intake of fluids can vary, depending on the individual and on factors such as age, climate, and physical activity. The Institute of Medicine determined that an adequate intake (AI) for men is roughly 3 liters (about 13 cups) of total beverages a day. The AI for women is 2.2 liters (about 9 cups) of total beverages a day.

The fluid could be water, semi-skimmed milk or fruit juice. Avoid caffeine and sugary drinks, and never consume beer or other alcoholic beverages to hydrate.

## Working Safely

# Cancer top cause of job deaths

By **BRYDEN WINSBY**  
FOR COMFORT ZONE

You might think most work-related deaths are caused by incidents such as falling from heights, electrocution, fire or being struck by a large object. You would be wrong. Recent research has shown that occupational cancer is the leading culprit in Canada.

By definition, occupational cancer is caused by carcinogens to which workers are exposed as a result of their job activities. Overall, it is estimated that such exposures account for only eight percent of total cancer cases (most are related to tobacco use, inactive lifestyle, obesity and diet) — but the risk of exposure to carcinogens can be much greater in the workplace.

A 2013 study by the Occupational Cancer Research Centre, published in the Canadian Medical Association's online journal, found there are now more than two occupational cancer deaths for each traumatic injury death.

Nationwide, the high-risk industries for occupational cancer were found to be manufacturing, construction, mining and, more recently, government services (believed to be the result of an increase in the number of compensation claims accepted for firefighters in Ontario).

Lung cancer and mesothelioma, usually the result of asbestos exposure, represent most of the claims for deaths from occupational cancer.

Other types of work-related cancer include leukemia, laryngeal, skin (non-melanoma), kidney and nasal.

Identifying carcinogens is complicated. Many Canadian jurisdictions regulate workplace exposures, but the specific substances regulated and the regulatory requirements vary.

Typically, there are three important routes of exposure in a workplace setting — inhalation, skin contact and ingestion.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety offers this general advice to help you work safely with a known carcinogen:

- Consult the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for information about the hazards and necessary precautions for the specific carcinogenic material you are using.

- Understand all the hazards associated with the material, including additional health concerns (serious short-term health effects or irritation, for example), reactivity and flammability.

- Know how to use the material safely to protect yourself and co-workers.

- Ensure engineering controls, such as ventilation, are operating. Closed handling systems may be necessary to prevent the release of the material (dust, mist, vapor, gas) into the workplace.

- Use the smallest quantity possible.

- Follow safe work practices specified by your employer.

- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment specified for the job. This may include respiratory protection and chemical protective clothing, such as an apron and gloves, made from materials that protect against the chemicals being handled.

- Report ventilation failures, leaks, or spills to your supervisor immediately.

It is also important to develop safe personal habits at work, such as keeping your hands away from your lips and mouth, not eating or drinking in the work area, not rubbing your sleeves on your face, and always washing your hands and face thoroughly with soap and water before eating.

Workers must be careful not to bring hazards home — including carcinogenic substances. Here are some ways to do that:

- Wash as soon as possible after finishing work.

- Immediately change clothes soiled or soaked with chemicals to prevent contact with skin.

- If you take work clothes home to be cleaned, put them in a plastic bag, and put the bag in the trunk of your vehicle. Keep work clothes away from other laundry.

- Do not take tools, scrap, chemicals, packaging and similar items home.

## Consumer product recalls from Health Canada product recall website

April 17, 2014

### Pier 1 Imports Recalls Hanging Glass Star Lantern

*Joint Recall with Health Canada, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (US CPSC) and Pier 1 Imports.*

This recall includes all glass hanging star lanterns sold individually. The lanterns were sold in amber (SKU 2717349), clear (SKU 2717351) and red (SKU 2724169).

The lantern is a three-dimension star-shape made of gold-toned metal and glass. The lantern measures 18 centimetres (7 inches) wide by 18 centimetres (7 inches) deep by 18 centimetres (7 inches) in height. A metal tea

light cup sits inside the metal and glass star. The solder could potentially melt due to heat from a tealight. This can cause the lantern to break, posing a fire hazard.

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2014/39109r-eng.php>

April 17, 2014

### Kiss My Face, LLC Recalls Foaming Soaps

*Recall by Health Canada.*

The recalled products are contaminated with the bacteria *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Pseudomonas fluorescens*. *Pseudomonas* species can enter the body through cuts and lesions and may cause local infections in

people with weakened immune systems. Neither the company nor Health Canada have received any reports of consumer incidents or injuries related to the use of these products. The recalled products were sold at various retailers across Canada between November 2012 and March 2014. Consumers who purchased any of the lots being recalled are advised to return the product container to the original point of purchase for reimbursement. Alternatively consumers can contact Kiss My Face directly at 1-800-262-5477. <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2014/39065r-eng.php>

## Health & Safety Roundup

### *I Learned The Hard Way* contest entry



#### Reader learns the importance of a handrail

I was having difficulty sleeping one night so I got out of bed to get a drink and a book. There are three stairs up to the main part of my house from my bedroom. Going back to bed with hands full, I decided this night I would turn out the lights at the top of the stairs. I have never done that before and I still don't know why I did it that night.

With my hands full I couldn't hold the railing. On the bottom step I missed my footing and fell. I was lucky that only my left foot was fractured and that I hadn't broken any ribs as I landed hard on my left side.

I live alone, and where I fell there was no easy access to a phone. I realized after a few minutes that only my foot hurt and was able to get up and drive myself to the hospital.

I am still in the walking cast and expect to be in it another two weeks if not longer. The fracture I sustained is one of the slowest healing and most prone to complications leading to surgery.

All this happened because I decided to do the stairs in the dark with full hands.

From this incident, I learned that safety is always a concern even at home and that handrails are not just for decoration. I learned to always carry a phone when I go downstairs to the basement because if I fell down there, no one would know.

- Cathy

*This is one of the entries from the Comfort Zone's 'I Learned The Hard Way Contest'. We will be publishing all of the entries in this space over the next few issues. We thank all of our readers who participated in our contest.*

## Home hazard prevention checklist

We spend a lot of time indoors, so it's important to ensure that our homes are safe, healthy places to live. By learning about health hazards that can exist in our homes, we can better protect our health and the health of our family and visitors.

Did you know that many common household products contain chemical substances that can be harmful to health? Young children in particular need extra care and protection from products that contain chemicals – they are naturally curious and don't easily recognize hazards.

Here's a checklist you can post as a reminder of ways you can protect yourself and family from unwanted chemical hazards:

- I have emergency phone numbers posted near or on my phone.
- I keep chemical products such as cleaning liquids and powders, polishes, drain cleaners, paint thinners, and windshield washer fluids locked up and away from young children.
- I make sure that my child-resistant closures are working.
- I read and follow all labelling

information carefully in order to use products safely and I learn the meanings of all warning symbols.

- I teach children what hazard labels mean.

- I learn about a chemical before I use it and look for other options that may be a healthier choice.

- I never mix household chemicals together.

- I open windows when painting or varnishing.

- I change air filters regularly for things like furnaces and ventilation systems and cooking exhaust fans. I also ensure kitchen and bathroom vents send air outside.

- I keep the door between the garage and the house firmly closed.

- I ask all family members and visitors to remove their shoes when coming in to keep floors free from harmful bacteria and other substances that can be tracked in.

Every day, countless families are exposed to avoidable household hazards. By following simple steps, you can help to keep your family safe and healthy.

## Make your back a number one priority

(NC) Do you spend most of your day sitting, whether it's at work, in the car, on public transport, or watching TV? Well, you're not alone. We are a nation of sitters and it can take its toll on our health.

Almost all of us will suffer from back pain at some point in our lives. In fact, low back pain (LBP) is the leading cause of disability worldwide.

Low back pain is the second largest contributing factor to lost work time, behind the common cold. Here are a few q and a's about back pain and its contributors:

**How do you know if you have bad posture?**

- When you look at yourself straight on in the mirror, one shoulder looks

higher than the other.

- If you stand with your back against the wall, you have to push your head back to get it to touch the wall.

**What contributes to bad posture?**

- Poor sitting and standing habits

- Obesity

- Poor work environment

- Pregnancy

- Weak core muscles (abs)

- High-heeled shoes

- Tight muscles; decreased flexibility

There are a number of exercises and stretches that can help improve posture and spinal health.

For a list of exercises and the proper was to to them visit:

[www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/better-posture-exercises](http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/better-posture-exercises).

## Your Healthy Lifestyle

# Wellness ZONE

## Easy tips for healthy eating

The Mediterranean diet is recognized as one of the healthiest in the world and is often recommended by nutritionists as an example of healthy, delicious eating.

According to the Mayo Clinic, if you're looking for a heart-healthy eating plan, the Mediterranean diet might be right for you. The Mediterranean diet incorporates the basics of healthy eating — plus a splash of flavorful olive oil and perhaps even a glass of red wine — among other components characterizing the traditional cooking style of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

Most healthy diets include fruits, vegetables, fish and whole grains, and limit unhealthy fats. While these parts of a healthy diet remain tried-and-true, subtle variations or differences in proportions of certain foods may make a difference in your risk of heart disease.

Research has shown that the traditional Mediterranean diet reduces the risk of heart disease. In fact, an analysis of more than 1.5 million healthy adults demonstrated that following a Mediterranean diet was associated with a reduced risk of death from heart disease and cancer, as well as a reduced incidence of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends the Mediterranean diet as an eating plan that can help promote health and prevent disease. And the Mediterranean diet is one your whole family can follow for good health.

Eat the Mediterranean way with these tips:

■ **Good food with good company** – The Mediterranean way of eating is all about enjoying your meal with family and



friends. Where possible, plan to have your meals in good company and enjoy a glass of red wine while you're at it – it's a Mediterranean diet staple after all!

■ **Slow it down** – Take the time to enjoy your food, eat slowly and savour the food and the experience. Also be sure to celebrate each meal by dining at the table – not at your desk, standing up or in your car.

■ **Embrace Meatless Monday** – Not only are vegetables commonplace when eating the Mediterranean way, but they are also a good source of minerals and proteins. Eat smaller portions and make more space on your plate for seasonal vegetables.

■ **Say yes to pasta** – The Mediterranean diet includes grains like pasta as a staple. Use a good quality pasta cooked al dente and enjoy healthy additions such as olive oil, nuts, grilled seafood, beans, tomatoes, vegetables and a bit of cheese for flavour. For added protein, fibre and omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (which are all key nutrients in the Mediterranean diet), cook with a multigrain pasta.

## Protect children from chemical hazards at home

Young children are curious and like to put things in their mouths, so a bad taste or smell may not be enough to keep them away.

Did you know that household chemical products are among the top products responsible for injuries and deaths in children? Even small amounts of a hazardous substance or someone else's medication can be dangerous to a child.

By understanding what the risks are and learning about preventative actions, parents, families and caregivers can keep children safer.

### What to do

#### Use household chemicals safely.

Chemicals such as cleaning liquids and powders, polishes, drain cleaners, paint thinners and windshield washer fluids should be used carefully, locked away and disposed of as recommended. Learn the meaning of product warning symbols and carefully follow all directions on the label.

■ **Take off your shoes when you come inside.** Footwear attracts all kinds of bacteria and other substances that you wouldn't want tracked across your floor, especially around crawling babies or fall-prone toddlers.

■ **Ventilate your home.** Fresh air is a must inside your home. Open your windows when using chemicals such as paints and varnishes. Use an exhaust fan above your stove to send fumes outdoors while cooking.

■ **Wash your hands often.** Lather up with soap and water for at least 15 seconds – about as long as it takes to sing Happy Birthday. This helps to remove harmful substances you or your child may have touched.

Look for low-emission paints, glue and woodworking materials to use for home projects.

## Your Healthy Lifestyle

# Wellness ZONE



## How to beat spring allergies

For many allergy sufferers, there is more than just spring in the air. Weeds, grass and tree pollen travelling through the air can often bring about symptoms such as nasal congestion, runny nose and sneezing.

For those with asthma, seasonal allergies can be more than just a nuisance since the same environmental factors can also trigger an asthma attack.

Though avoiding seasonal allergens is not always possible, it is important to understand what triggers your symptoms and how to alleviate them.

**Nagging Nasal Symptoms:** For nasal congestion, runny nose and sneezing, there are many over-the-counter antihistamines and decongestants available to help address these bothersome symptoms. Drug-free nasal strips may offer additional relief of nasal congestion at night to help improve sleep, opening up the nose and thereby improving airflow. For more severe symptoms, talk to your doctor about prescription treatment options.

**Itchy and Irritated Eyes:** Over-the-counter eye drops can help soothe symptoms, or talk to your doctor about prescription treatment options.

**Long-term Lung Issues:** Seventy-five percent of asthma patients also suffer from seasonal allergies. To reduce the risk of an asthma attack during allergy season and throughout the year, it's important to take your asthma medication(s) as prescribed to relieve symptoms and help maintain control.

At your next visit, talk to your doctor about your allergy and asthma symptoms and discuss which treatment options may be right for you.

## Five tips for better conversations with kids

If you are a parent, you probably understand the value of maintaining open communication with your kids. But getting there is not always easy – for parents, or for kids themselves.

There are a lot of concrete things parents can do to have better conversations with kids and teens. Building trust and communication is really important, and it's an ongoing process.

### Here are some tips:

- Let your kids know you are safe to talk to. Explicitly tell them that you're open to talking about the tough stuff, and that there's nothing they could say that would damage your relationship.

- Make space for organic opportunities to communicate. Instead of sitting your child down and saying "let's have a talk," spend time together at a shared activity (like going out for lunch, taking a walk, shopping, or driving somewhere in the car) where conversation is more likely to arise naturally.

- When your child does bring something up, it's okay not to have all of the answers. You're not expected to.



- Don't make assumptions about what your child is experiencing. This shuts down the conversation and is a missed opportunity. Instead, ask questions, show you're interested, and give your child your full attention before jumping in.

- If you know your child is dealing with a specific issue, perhaps it's time to talk to a professional, such as a school counsellor, or your family healthcare professional.

## Spring forward with breathe-easy tips

With the snow and cold behind us, we will be getting busy with dusting, mopping and clearing out our closets during our annual spring cleaning.

But, before you start clearing out all of the nooks and crannies in your home, it's important to understand the potential impact on your health.

Though giving your house a deep clean is a good idea, it can also stir up allergens and dust, which can cause irritation to your respiratory system.

Before you start your annual spring cleaning, follow these steps:

- **Natural beauty:** Harsh cleaning sprays can cause irritation and trigger breathing problems. Instead, try a less toxic alternative like hydrogen peroxide or a natural cleaning solution like vinegar.

- **Destroy dust:** Take steps to make your home as dust-free as possible throughout the year by dusting and vacuuming regularly and washing bedding in hot water to avoid the collection of dust mites. If you suffer from respiratory conditions like asthma or allergies, consider removing or reducing the carpet in your home as well as replacing curtains with blinds to further minimize the collection of dust and dust mites.



# Comfort **ZONE**

## SAFETY MEETING

Read this part of the meeting aloud

## Pinch point safety tips

*Today's safety meeting is about identifying pinch points*

Do you know what a pinch point is? Perhaps you have heard the term a lot around the workplace, and you think a pinch point is only something you encounter when you are at work. Actually, a pinch point injury can take place at home just as easily as it can at work.

A pinch point is anywhere a part of the body is caught between two objects. The most obvious pinch points are slamming your finger in a door or getting your foot stuck in a floor grate, but a pinch point injury is also a worker getting her hand crushed in a piece of machinery or someone being crushed between a building and a vehicle.

Common causes of injuries from pinch points include:

- Not keeping your eyes on the task at hand or not paying attention.
- Working or walking in areas with mobile equipment and fixed structures.
- Using tools for purposes other than their intended use.
- Placing body parts into moving equipment or machinery.
- Improper handling of materials or suspended loads.
- Defective equipment or not using guards.
- Loose clothing, hair or jewelry getting caught in rotating parts or equipment.

Remember these tips to avoid pinch points:

- Always be aware of pinch points that are present in your work environment, including those associated with equipment or machinery you may use while at work or at

home in the kitchen or your home workshop.

- Prior to use, assure all covers and protective shields for equipment and machinery pinch point hazards are in place.
- Loose clothing, jewelry and hair can be pulled into pinch points. To avoid this wear snug clothing, remove jewelry, and tie long hair back or secure under a cap before working in the vicinity of pinch point hazards. Your scarf or your hair could also get caught in kitchen appliances, so be aware.
- Never place your hands near or reach across rotating mechanical parts.
- Always be alert whenever you place your fingers, hands, toes, or feet between any objects.
- Do not operate equipment or machinery without required guards or shields.
- Shut off and de-energize equipment or machinery before performing maintenance or repairs.
- Always replace guards or shields after completing equipment and machinery maintenance or repairs.

*This information is repeated in your handout. Please share these tips at home. Thanks for your attention today.*

# Comfort **ZONE**

Distribute to meeting attendees

**SAFETY MEETING**

**Keep this handout for handy reference.**

## **Pinch point safety tips**

Remember these tips to avoid pinch points:

- Always be aware of pinch points that are present in your work environment, including those associated with equipment or machinery you may use while at work or at home in the kitchen or your home workshop.
- Prior to use, assure all covers and protective shields for equipment and machinery pinch point hazards are in place.
- Loose clothing, jewelry and hair can be pulled into pinch points. To avoid this wear snug clothing, remove jewelry, and tie long hair back or secure under a cap before working in the vicinity of pinch point hazards. Your scarf or your hair could also get caught in kitchen appliances, so be aware.
- Never place your hands near or reach across rotating mechanical parts.
- Always be alert whenever you place your fingers, hands, toes, or feet between any objects.
- Do not operate equipment or machinery without required guards or shields.
- Shut off and de-energize equipment or machinery before performing maintenance or repairs.
- Always replace guards or shields after completing equipment and machinery maintenance or repairs.

# Comfort **ZONE**

Attendance sheet

**SAFETY MEETING**

## Pinch point safety tips

Meeting date: \_\_\_\_\_

Have meeting attendees sign below:

Meeting leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Quiz:

1. Wearing a long scarf is okay when working around a pinch point hazard.

True  
False

2. You should never place your hands near or on rotating parts of a machine.

True  
False

3. You should be alert when placing your hands or fingers in between objects.

True  
False

4. Gloves should not be worn around pinch point hazards.

True  
False

5. You should always replace guards after performing maintenance on a machine or tool.

True  
False

6. A pinch point hazard could also be someone getting crushed between a wall and a car.

True  
False

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Answers to safety  
meeting quiz:  
1. False  
2. True  
3. True  
4. True  
5. True  
6. True