



St. John Ambulance

SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play

FIRST in FIRST AID

FALL/WINTER 2011 • ISSUE No. 2

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FLU PREVENTION

**HEALTHY
WORKPLACES**

**EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS**



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Growing up, Autumn always seemed to be about change. As the leaves began to change colour we left the fun of summer vacation and returned to school. And with school came new clothes, shoes, books, and pencils. As we got older, we came to recognize the changes of fall in different ways. It became a time to turn back the clocks, a reminder to change the batteries in your smoke alarms, and a time to change your tires in advance of winter's snow.

In this edition of "First in First Aid", we're going to remind, or perhaps introduce you to some of the things that you can change in your routines this fall and winter that we hope will improve your health, safety, and quality of life at work, home, or play. This edition will focus on ways you can help prevent the flu, and will look at tips to help you prepare for emergencies at home. It will explore ways to build a healthier work environment. And of course seasonal change comes with the all-too-familiar changes in the weather, and this edition will also help reinforce seasonal safety habits and tips.

We hope you'll find these articles interesting, helpful, and enjoyable, and we encourage you to comment on the magazine and offer suggestions for articles that are of particular interest to your seasonal and year-round health and safety needs.



Brian Cole is the Director, Provincial Operations and Editor of First in First Aid

For over 125 years St. John Ambulance has been teaching first aid in Ontario. Today St. John trains over 155,000 Ontarians annually in first aid and other health care related courses and remains dedicated to saving lives at work, home and play. With over 4,000 volunteers contributing over half a million hours of community service a year, St. John Ambulance is an integral part of the community, offering such unique and innovative volunteer programs as; medical first response, disaster response, car seat clinics, health and safety related youth programs and therapy dog services.

As a world-wide, charitable, humanitarian organization, proceeds from St. John Ambulance's first aid training and proceeds from donors across Ontario directly support these vital community services programs.

For more information on St. John Ambulance training courses, volunteer and charitable opportunities or to contact your local branch, visit www.sja.ca/on

Roll Up Your Sleeve to Prevent the Flu

Ontario Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care

Fall has arrived again - a season that brings us bright colours, crisp weather and... the flu.

Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care launched this year's flu immunization program on October 1. Influenza is a serious illness that can lead to pneumonia and Ontario is one of very few places in the world that offers free flu immunization to all of its residents.

Why get the flu vaccine?

Flu vaccination actually strengthens your immune system against three strains of the flu virus. It does this by stimulating your immune system to build up antibodies against the virus, making it stronger so that it's ready to fight off the illness before it starts.

It's important to get the flu vaccine early because it can take up to two weeks for antibodies to build up after you get the flu vaccine. The earlier you get it, the earlier your immune system will have the antibodies it needs to be ready for flu season. So make sure to get the flu shot early this year.

Who needs the flu shot?

Unless there is a medical reason not to, everyone aged six months or older can benefit from getting the flu vaccine. It's especially important for people with weakened immune systems, young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and anyone who takes care of people in these groups.

How well does the flu vaccine protect against the flu?

The flu vaccine is safe and it's the most effective way to protect you and your family from the flu. Studies have found that the flu shot can prevent 70 to 90 per cent of influenza in healthy adults and children. An Ontario study showed that every year, flu vaccination eliminates the need for over 200,000 visits to doctor's offices and 30,000 visits to hospital emergency departments. It also prevents approximately 300 deaths.

What can you do to stay healthy?

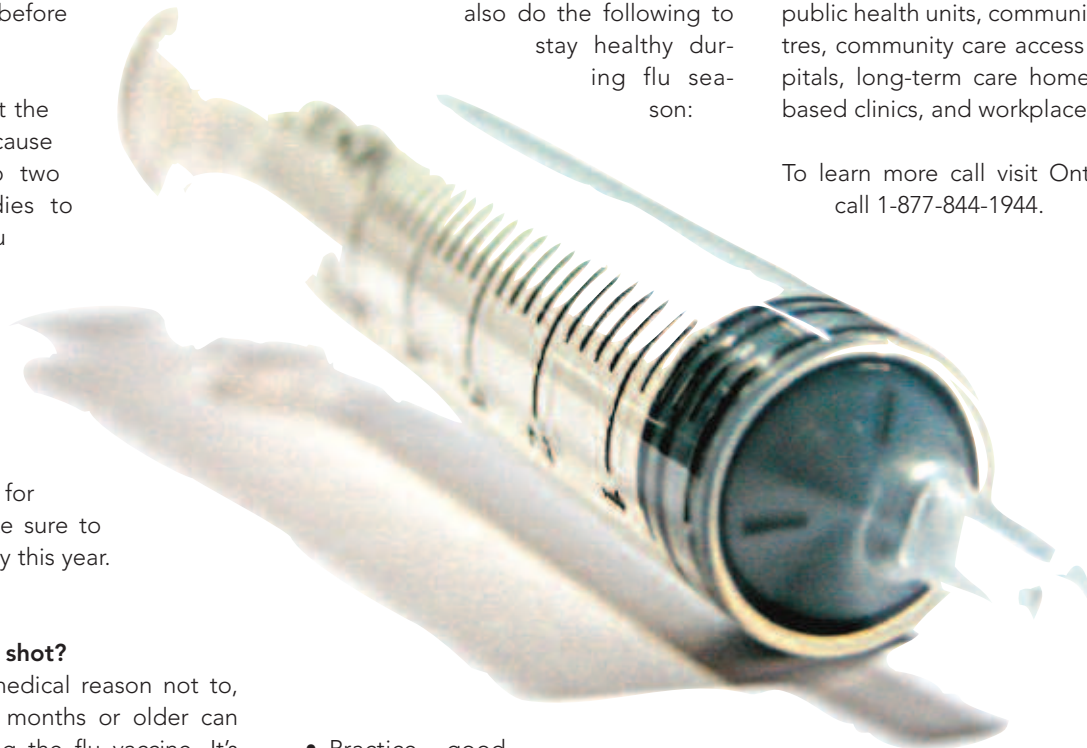
That most important thing you can do is get a flu shot and get it early! It is the best protection against getting the flu.

Along with getting the flu vaccine, you can also do the following to stay healthy during flu season:

- Keep your hands away from your face. The flu virus usually enters the body through the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue out. Cough into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- Avoid large crowds of people where viruses can spread easily. Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected

Ontarians can get their free flu shot from their physicians and through community flu clinics offered across the province by public health units, community health centres, community care access centres, hospitals, long-term care homes, pharmacy-based clinics, and workplace clinics.

To learn more call visit Ontario.ca/flu or call 1-877-844-1944.



- Practice good hand hygiene - wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly and often.
- Keep an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (gel or wipes) handy at work, home, and in your car.



Healthy Workplace

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)

Life and Work. Must they conflict? After all, work is just one part of our lives, isn't it? But it's easy for work to take over, which is why some experts say employers need to dramatically rethink their corporate culture. Work hours and overtime have been squeezing other important things out of the average worker's day - such as sleeping, eating, raising a family, and simply living.

The workplace has a powerful effect on the health of its members. In fact, work itself is one of the major factors influencing workers' health. With so many Canadians spending a large part of their life at work, the workplace also serves as a natural setting to promote health and wellness and to help people achieve their best physical and mental well-being. It is a full-circle situation: how healthy a person feels affects their job satisfaction and productivity, just as their level of job satisfaction affects their health.

Employers are catching on that happy, healthy workers tend to stay on the job, have fewer absences, and feel a sense of loyalty to the company. This translates directly to the clear benefits of reduced employee turnover, lower recruitment and retraining costs, and a better overall bottom line.

Recognizing the importance of healthy workers is the first step. And today's enlightened employers are taking the next step by committing to health promotion in the workplace and actively getting involved.

What exactly does workplace health include? It extends beyond traditional safety issues and expands the standard definitions of health. Consider it an extension of traditional health and safety programs that protect workers from workplace hazards. The health movement encompasses a healthy work/life balance, wellness programs, mental and physical fitness, career growth, financial and family counseling, lifestyle seminars, and more. A workplace health program can take many forms. One organization may focus on flexible work hours and daycare facilities, while another emphasizes fitness and nutrition.

What elements can be considered in a workplace health program?

Workplace health and wellness programs typically have many elements or areas of focus. The focus of your program will depend on the exact needs of your unique workplace. Remember that programs are typically most effective (and see a better return on investment) when they address a wide range of issues or interests.

Common elements typically considered in workplace health programs include:

- Support for healthy living such as:
 - healthy eating
 - active living
 - smoking cessation
 - work organization
 - mental health
 - work/life balance
 - time management
- A safe working environment
- Removing psychological risk factors
- A violence prevention policy (including harassment and bullying)
- Fair hiring practices
- The availability of professional counselling when required
- Communication and awareness sessions on personal health related topics
- Training about stress management, time management and work/life balance
- Employee participation in decisions that concern them (e.g. job analysis, new expansions, developments)
- Practices related to recognition and job satisfaction
- Support for performance of tasks (e.g. on-the-job training, professional development)
- Accommodating employees who wish to exercise before, after, or during work hours
- Financial assistance for health-related programs (e.g. recreational activities, health screening tests)
- Employee assistance programs (EAPs)

Creating a workplace health program

Organizations have different dynamics and needs. An older workforce may be more interested in elder care or weight control than in day-care. A multicultural

workforce may prefer to focus on initiatives that promote harmony and improved communication as ways to reduce stress and solve problems.

By getting to know the employees and their needs and preferences, you can customize a workplace health program that's likely to succeed. The surest way to find out what people want is simply to ask them. Conduct an in-house survey to determine the programs your staff will use the most. Do they want a corporate rate for a weight-loss clinic? A lunchtime jogging club? Seminars on stress management? Let them choose from a variety of options the company is willing to offer.

Other ideas might include smoking cessation programs, flexible work hour arrangements, assistance with daycare or elder care, conflict resolution assistance, discount rates at the local recreation centre, on-site weight reduction programs, or any other health promotion program that will benefit everyone in the organization.

Health promotion doesn't have to be a costly initiative, and organizations are already reaping rewards from their efforts. Statistics Canada, after implementing a work/life balance program, found that 78% of their employees reported a satisfactory balance of work and home life and noticed an impressive 91% reduction in the rate of employee turnover.

Hop on board, and remember: by taking an interest in workplace health you have already taken the first step.

Healthy Workplace Resources

Visit www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers and search our easy-to-read fact-sheets on topics such as:

- Mental health at work
- Aging workers
- Work/life balance
- Bullying in the workplace
- Healthy eating at work
- Active living at work
- Exercises for a healthy back

Emergency Preparedness Kit

Aman Kainth, Public Education & Communication Specialist,
Emergency Management Ontario

- Employee assistance programs
- Flexible work arrangements
- Workplace stress

About CCOHS

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), a Canadian federal government agency based in Hamilton, Ontario is Canada's national resource for the advancement of workplace health and safety. CCOHS promotes the total well-being - physical, psychosocial and mental health - of working Canadians by providing information, training, education, management systems and solutions that support health and safety programs and the prevention of injury and illness. CCOHS partners and collaborates with agencies and organizations from Canada and around the world to improve the quality and quantity of resources and programs, as to expand the breadth of usage of occupational health information across many different segments of society. Visit their website at www.ccohs.ca.

Are you ready for the unexpected? Recent emergencies have demonstrated the need for individuals and families in Ontario to be prepared. It is important to prepare your household by ensuring that you have an emergency survival kit as part of your family emergency plan. An emergency survival kit should contain all of the items you and your family will need to stay safe and comfortable for up to 72 hours.

Basic items for your emergency survival kit:

- Flashlight and batteries, or crank flashlight
- Radio and batteries, or crank radio
- Spare batteries
- Bottled water (4L per person, per day)
- Non-perishable food
- Can opener
- First aid kit and medication
- Whistle
- Candles and matches/lighter
- Clothing and footwear (appropriate to season)
- Blankets or sleeping bag
- Toilet paper and other personal items
- Extra car keys and cash (small change)
- Important papers (identification)
- Playing cards or games

Every household will have different requirements for their emergency survival kit. You will want to consider the specific needs of your family members when gathering your supplies. For example, families with infants will need to include items such as diapers and formula. Others may require medication, copies of prescriptions, or extra glasses/contacts.

Remember...

- Store all of your emergency survival kit items in one spot - a backpack or duffel bag works well.
- Keep your emergency survival kit in an easily accessible location and ensure your family knows where it is stored.
- Check the contents of your kit twice a year (verify expiry dates on food, water and medication; test your radio, flashlight and batteries).

Take the time to plan ahead for your family, they're worth it.

Visit www.ontario.ca/beprepared to learn more about preparing your 72-hour emergency survival kit.





The Importance of Regular Eye Examinations

Dr. William Ulakovic, Thunder Bay Optometrist on behalf of the Ontario Association of Optometrists

The visual demands of various industrial job descriptions necessitate the need for periodic comprehensive eye examinations from an optometrist. This is particularly important for workers over the age of forty who begin to experience natural age-related changes in accommodation (focussing of the eyes for close work). Workers who spend long hours in front of computer monitors, perform intricate close work tasks such as welding, rely on micrometers, etc. will benefit from an eye examination to determine the need for prescription spectacle lenses. An optometrist will also provide suggestions and advice on proper eyewear and lens design for certain task-specific jobs.

"An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure." This certainly applies to safety in the workplace, and in particular to eye safety, where the majority of industrial accidents occur year after year. Better training and education of workers is paramount in helping to prevent eye injuries on the job.

Workplace safety should always include eye safety for welders. Proper precautions can protect welders and those around them from eye injuries. Every welder should be trained so that he or she knows the risks and what to do to minimize those risks. For example, you should never look at the flame on a welding machine, whether it is a robot or at the end of your welding torch. A fraction of a second is all that is needed for a welding flame to cause damage to the eye. This is often called "arch flash" and it may be several hours before you realize that you have been injured. Once it presents itself, the condition is incredibly painful. If you always wear a welding safety mask you can avoid suffering with this condition.

What to do when an eye related injury occurs

For a serious eye injury that involves trauma, a call to the closest hospital emergency room is in order. The injured worker should be transported with a protective cover over the eye but excessive pressure should not be applied. For any chemical splash the first line of action needs to be

immediate and thorough flushing of the eyes in an eye bath station if available.

Optometrists can often provide timely and appropriate care for corneal foreign body injuries, eye infections, or other non-traumatic eye injuries such as corneal abrasions, welding flashes, and contact-lens related issues. Optometrists can diagnose many industrial eye-related problems and provide treatment or make necessary referrals to other healthcare providers including ophthalmologists if needed.



For more information on eye safety, eye health and optometrists, please visit www.eyecareoao.com or call the Ontario Association of Optometrists toll free at 800-540-3837.

What Contributes To Eye Injuries At Work?

- Not wearing eye protection: Nearly 60% of workers injured were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.
- Wearing the wrong kind of eye protection for the job: About 40% of the injured workers were wearing some form of eye protection when the accident occurred. These workers were most commonly wearing eyeglasses with no side shields, though injuries among employees wearing full-cup or flat-fold side shields occurred, as well.

What Causes Eye Injuries?

- Flying particles: Almost 70% of eye injuries result from flying or falling objects or sparks striking the eye. Injured workers estimated that nearly 60% of the objects were smaller than a pin head. Most of the particles were said to be traveling faster than a hand-thrown object when the accident occurred.
- Contact with chemicals caused 20% of the injuries. Other accidents were caused by objects swinging from a fixed or attached position, like tree limbs, ropes, chains, or tools which were pulled into the eye while the worker was using them.

Where Do Accidents Occur Most Often?

Craft work; industrial equipment operation: Potential eye hazards can be found in nearly every industry. However, more than 40% of injuries studied occurred among craft workers, like mechanics, repairers, carpenters, and plumbers. Over 30% of the injured workers were operatives, such as assemblers, sanders, and grinding machine operators. Labourers suffered about 20% of the eye injuries. Almost half the injured workers were employed in manufacturing; slightly more than 20% were in construction.

How Can Eye Injuries Be Prevented?

Always wear effective eye protection: OSHA standards require that employers provide workers with suitable eye protection. To be effective, the eyewear must be of the appropriate type for the hazard encountered and properly fitted. For example, the Bureau of Labour Standards (BLS) survey showed that 94% of the injuries to workers wearing eye protection resulted from objects or chemicals going around or under the protector. Eye protective devices should allow for air to circulate between the eye and the lens. Only 13 workers injured while wearing eye protection reported breakage.

Nearly 20% of the injured workers with eye protection wore face shields or welding helmets. However, only 6% of the workers injured while wearing eye protection wore goggles, which generally offer better protection for the eyes. Best protection is afforded when goggles are worn with face shields.

Better training and education: BLS reported that most workers were hurt while doing their regular jobs. Workers injured while not wearing protective eyewear most often said they believed it was not required by the situation. Even though the vast majority of employers furnished eye protection at no cost to employees, about 40% of the workers received no eye safety training on where and what kind of eyewear should be used.

Maintenance: Eye protection devices must be properly maintained. Scratched and dirty devices reduce vision, cause glare and may contribute to accidents.

First Aid in Action

Erin Johnson, Coordinator, Branch Support, St. John Ambulance Council for Ontario

Every year the St. John Ambulance Council for Ontario is honoured to recognize hundreds of lifesavers from across the Province. These heroic men, women, and children come from all different walks of life but are united by the fact that they responded when someone, oftentimes a stranger, needed their help.

We are proud to share these stories, and would like to encourage you to submit your own first aid stories to us. If you or someone you know* has recently (within a year of the incident) used first aid to help save a life you can submit a nomination for a St. John Ambulance Lifesaving Award. For more information, or to make a submission, please contact:

*Erin Johnson,
St. John Ambulance, Council for
Ontario, Tel: (800) 268-7581 ext. 252,
Email: erin.johnson@on.sja.ca*

* On-duty healthcare professionals may not qualify for St. John Ambulance Lifesaving Awards. Nominees do not have to be trained by St. John Ambulance to qualify. Nominations must be submitted within a year of the incident.

For three years Johnny Becerra has been a Medical First Responder volunteer for Brampton St. John Ambulance. At first he joined the organization to pursue his interest in firefighting, but soon Johnny became enamoured with the service he and his fellow volunteers were providing for the local community.

January 21, 2011 started out as a typical day for Johnny. He had spent the day supervising his team on a construction site, but having worked up a sizable appetite, he left the site to find a late lunch. He was standing in line waiting to order when he received a call from the job site; there was an issue with the plumbing. Not wanting to leave anything to chance, Johnny left the restaurant and headed back.

When he returned, a woman who lived in the apartment where they were working came running to him, visibly shaken. She told him that one of the construction

workers in the building had collapsed and wasn't responding.

Johnny immediately went into action: he followed the woman back to the casualty, one of his co-workers, and began to assess the scene. His co-worker had collapsed in the recovery position and was unresponsive, but Johnny's efforts to assist were challenged by moaning sounds his co-worker was making. While it was clear he was in distress, Johnny could not immediately determine the need for CPR intervention due to a condition known as Agonal Respiration. Agonal Respiration is an abnormal pattern of breathing that can include slow, shallow breaths, gasping, laboured breathing, and sometimes strange vocalizations that may be caused by cerebral ischemia, hypoxia or anoxia.

When Johnny noticed his coworker's skin colour began to change he immediately began CPR. After two sets of chest compressions the casualty inhaled deeply and opened his eyes. EMS arrived on the scene and transported him to the hospital where it was discovered he had a pre-existing condition that caused the collapse, and that he would need surgery to correct it. Had it not been for Johnny's lifesaving intervention the outcome may have been very different for his co-worker.

<<< Johnny Becerra, construction worker, St. John Ambulance volunteer, lifesaver.





Snow Safety

Erin Johnson, Coordinator, Branch Support, St. John Ambulance Council for Ontario

Tips to help you cope wherever snow may find you

Every year we ignore the signs, hoping that by some miracle of nature it won't happen, that maybe this time it will miss us completely. But every year the days grow shorter, the nights get longer, and the mercury plummets, heralding the start of yet another winter. Before you know it, homes are submerged in snow and roads are covered in ice. But don't panic - St. John Ambulance has tips to help you cope with the pending onslaught.

Snow Shoveling

Possibly one of the most strenuous winter activities, snow shoveling is a heavy-duty muscular and cardiovascular workout. Even physically fit individuals should take precautions before they tackle their sidewalks and driveways.



Don't be proud.

If you have a physical condition, such as a bad back or heart disease, don't shovel. Instead, enlist the help of family, friends, or neighbours. If you don't have a support network, hire a professional snow clearing service or pay neighbourhood kids to help. Seniors or persons with a disability who live in areas where snow is not cleared regularly are advised to call their city office for service options.

It feels like a workout, because it is a workout. Snow shoveling is physical work—you engage several muscle groups, and can really get your heart pumping. As such you should treat snow shoveling like you would a workout in the gym: make sure to warm up, stay hydrated, and take breaks when you need to.



Winter Driving

Winter can make for some highly hazardous driving conditions, including icy roads, hidden lane lines, and whiteout conditions. If you can't avoid driving in these conditions, it's important to take extra care to get home safely.

Switch to winter tires. We know...they're expensive, you don't have room to store them, and you certainly don't have time to change them. However, winter tires are much safer for driving in winter conditions than all season tires, and will help your vehicle stop an average sixty feet sooner.

Slow and Steady. When the roads are covered in snow or there is the potential for black ice - particularly on bridges - slow down. If you go too fast, you run the risk of spinning out and this can have tragic consequences. If you must travel through bad weather, leave yourself lots of time so you don't feel the need to rush.

Respect the plow. Never pass a snow plow on the right. This can cause a serious collision or even the loss of life. Besides, the road behind the plow will be in better condition than the road ahead of it.

Keep an Emergency Kit in Your Car. Sometimes, no matter how careful you are, things happen that you don't expect. When travelling in bad weather, you should be prepared to stay sheltered in your car in case you become stuck. Useful items to keep in your vehicle include: a St. John Ambulance Vehicle first aid kit, a protected candle (for warmth), waterproof matches, a whistle, extra warm clothes/blankets, a shovel, traction mats (or cat litter), a flashlight, water, and non-perishable, easy-open food. For more information on preparing a vehicle emergency kit, visit www.sja.ca/on.

St. John Ambulance Community Services

For over 125 years, St. John Ambulance volunteers have been keeping communities safe through programs such as Medical First Response, Search and Rescue, Youth Services, Therapy Dog, Disaster Services and Car Seat Safety.

VOLUNTEER TODAY!

For more information please visit www.sja.ca/on

