



PARTNERS IN HEALTH AT WORK

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Issue 5

April - June 2008



Dear Friends,

Spring is officially here, although many would agree that we still need some imagination to see its real face in the Berkshires.

By the time you read this, we hope that you are already enjoying nature's awakening. It should definitely feel great to do that in this area. In fact, Pittsfield was recently ranked 24th among the top 25 "green" cities in the U.S. by Country Home magazine, (www.countryhome.com/greencities/top25.html). So, go green and be proud of it.

Your BOH Team

NEWS & REGULATIONS

Dr. Jean Culver Certified AME for Class 2 and 3 Medical Certificates



We are pleased to announce that Jean Culver, MD, MPH, a Berkshire Occupational Health physician, has recently completed a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) program training to become a designated aviation medical examiner (AME). She

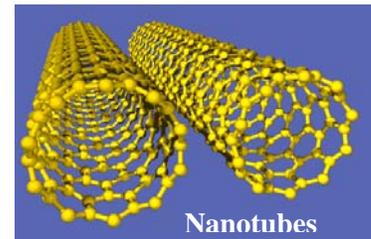
will be performing class 2 and 3 medical

certification of pilots. Dr. Culver, as well as Dr. Kenneth Stein, who is designated to perform all three classes of medical certification of pilots including airline transport pilots, will continue to provide the full scope of this service to the clients of Berkshire Occupational Health (BOH).



NIOSH's Interim Guidance on Nanoparticles Exposures

Last December, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) issued guidance



for the medical screening of workers potentially exposed to engineered nanoparticles (materials at least one dimension smaller than 100 nanometers) in the workplace. This issuance came amid concerns that environmental exposure to nanoparticles may result in adverse health effects for workers that manufacture or use such materials. Interim Guidance is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/115/>.

Where there is a potential for workplace exposure, NIOSH recommends the following: take practical measures to control exposures; conduct hazard surveillance as a basis for implementing controls; consider implementing established medical surveillance approaches to help assess whether controls are effective.



NIOSH is conducting a peer review of the guidance and has solicited input on the benefits of exposure registries for workers in nanoparticles industries.

Prepared by Dr. Damir Mazlagic



Study Links Contact Dermatitis to Hand Washing

New research examining the risk factors for irritant contact dermatitis among healthcare workers finds that those who washed their



hands more than 10 times per day were more likely to develop the condition than those who washed their hands less frequently. Contact dermatitis is a common skin condition marked by scaling, redness, itching and burning due to chemical substance action on the skin.

Conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the study included a total of 100 healthcare workers in Cleveland, Ohio, who washed their hands at least eight times daily. Study participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to identify frequency of hand washing, use of alcohol-based cleansers, history of specific medical conditions (including asthma, eczema and psoriasis, among others), and family history of dermatitis or eczema.

Hand dermatitis can take months to heal. Knowledge from the study could help workers at risk for the condition practice good hand care and follow preventative tips to decrease their risk factors on the job. The most

important factor in predicting who was at risk for hand dermatitis was a reaction to the detergent sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS).

Since environmental factors such as humidity and the requirement for good hand hygiene at work are beyond healthcare workers' control, prevention is the key to warding off hand dermatitis.

Researchers recommended the following for healthcare workers to help prevent hand dermatitis:

- The use of cotton gloves under rubber or vinyl gloves for wet work to prevent dampening of the skin (the cotton gloves should be changed frequently if wet work is prolonged).
- When appropriate, alcohol-based hand cleansers should be substituted for hand washing.
- A cream or ointment-based emollient (softening or soothing substance) should be applied immediately after water exposure before the skin is completely dry to prevent rapid drying and cracking. Topical steroids should not be used long-term as a substitute for emollients.

Prepared by Dr. Damir Mazlagic



Cadmium

Cadmium is an element that occurs naturally in the earth's crust. Pure cadmium is an extremely toxic, soft, silver-white metal. Food and cigarette smoke are the biggest sources of cadmium exposure for people in the general population.

Cadmium is commonly found in industrial workplaces, particularly where any ore is being processed or smelted. Workers can be



exposed to cadmium in the air from the smelting and refining of metals, or from the air in factories that make cadmium products such as batteries, coatings or plastics. Removal of cadmium paints by scraping or blasting may similarly pose a significant hazard. Workers can also be exposed when soldering or welding metal that contains cadmium. Several deaths from acute exposure have occurred among welders who have unsuspectingly welded on cadmium-containing alloys or worked with silver solders.

Each year, approximately 512,000 U.S. workers are in environments where cadmium exposure may occur.

Cadmium may be absorbed by inhalation (10-40% of inhaled dose) or ingestion (usually less than 10% of ingested dose). It accumulates in the liver and kidneys, where it stays for years.

Acute health effects from exposure to cadmium included fever, chills, shortness of breath (metal fume fever), kidney failure and gastrointestinal problems. Chronic exposure effects include kidney dysfunction, bone abnormalities, emphysema, anemia, lung cancer and loss of smell.

OSHA Standard 1910.1027 applies to all occupational exposures to cadmium and cadmium compounds, in all forms, and in all industries covered, except the construction-related industries, which are covered under 29 CFR 1926.1127. The employer shall assure that no employee is exposed to an airborne concentration of cadmium in excess of five micrograms per cubic meter of air (5 ug/m^3), calculated as an eight-hour time-weighted average exposure (TWA).

The standards state that the employer shall institute a medical surveillance program for all employees who are or may be currently exposed to cadmium at or above the action

level (2.5 micrograms per cubic meter of air), calculated as an 8-hour TWA, unless the employer demonstrates that the employee is not and will not be exposed at or above the action level for 30 or more days per year.

The employer shall also institute a medical surveillance program for some previously exposed employees (check the standard at www.OSHA.gov for details).

A periodic medical examination shall be provided within one year after the initial examination and thereafter at least biennially. Biological monitoring (urine and blood test) shall be provided at least annually, either as part of a periodic medical examination or separately as a periodic biological monitoring.

Prevention of cadmium exposure can be accomplished by enclosing processes that produce cadmium fumes, and by using local exhaust ventilation and personal protective measures. Strict workplace and personal hygiene is important to lessen the potential for chronic exposure. Smoking must be prohibited where there is a potential for exposure to cadmium.

Prepared by Dr. Damir Mazlagic



Spring has Arrived

Everyone in the Berkshires eagerly awaits the arrival of spring. Spring cleaning chores like emptying out and reorganizing the file room or a bedroom closet can bring risks for potential injuries. The term “spring cleaning” may imply climbing a ladder, lifting heavy objects or using cleaning solutions. All of these activities pose a potential for injuries.

According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries to older people in the U.S., costing up to \$20.2 billion annually. Although 60% of falls occur in the



home, falls can occur anytime, anyplace, to anyone and can be associated with simple activities such as climbing stairs or ladders. So, how do we prevent them?



Some simple housekeeping spring cleaning rules for work and home are:

- Always keep stairs, steps, landings, catwalks and floors clear of clutter.
- Eliminate trip hazards.
- Carry loads you can see over and keep one hand free to hold onto the rails, grab bars or other safety devices.
- Provide adequate lighting over stairs, steps and on landings.
- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs and steps.
- Keep electrical cords out of walkways.
- If you need to climb, always use a ladder rather than a chair.
- Use the correct ladder – step ladder or extension ladder – based on the work to be done.
- Inspect the ladder prior to use - make sure the rungs are dry and free of grease, oil, mud or any other slippery material.
- Choose a location for the ladder that is away from all power lines.
- Place the ladder on level ground and open it completely, and be sure all locks are engaged.
- Use the 4-to-1 rule for extension ladders, which means the bottom of the ladder should be one foot away from the wall for every four feet that the ladder rises. For example, if the ladder touches the wall 12 feet above the ground, the feet of the ladder should be three feet from the wall.
- Always face the ladder when climbing and wear slip-resistant shoes.
- Stand at or below the highest safe standing level on the ladder. For a step ladder, the safe standing level is the second rung from the top, and for an extension ladder, it's the fourth rung from the top.
- Do not overreach or lean over the side of the ladder. Climb down and reposition the ladder as needed.
- Use the buddy system. Let someone know that you will be up on a ladder and ask them to stand by or check on you periodically.
- When using cleaning supplies, read the labels before using them. Make sure all products are familiar to you and that MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) are readily available.
- Follow product label safety recommendations, like wearing gloves, goggles and masks when using harsh products.



- Do not mix cleaning products together because their contents could react and cause dangerous effects.
- Empty and rinse cleaning buckets after use and store them upside down or turned over.
- Always have emergency numbers available: 911 or Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222).

Enjoy your spring cleaning and stay safe.

Prepared by Carol Dickenson, NP

WELLNESS & PREVENTION

Choosing Foods and Beverages for Healthy Meetings, Conferences and Events

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention promotes workplace practices and policies that make healthy eating choices available whenever food and beverages are provided at work-related events. Many workers consume a significant portion of food away from home. Foods consumed at cafeterias, from vending machines and in other public food-service establishments are often not as nutritious or healthy as foods prepared at home. In general, American's diets exceed saturated fat and sodium recommendations. And only a minority of Americans meets fruit, vegetable and whole grain consumption recommendations. Employers can make it easier for employees to make healthy food choices by providing healthy food at meetings and other events they sponsor.

General Guidelines

Serve low-calorie and low-fat foods, fruits and vegetables, small portions (e.g. mini-muffins, mini bagels), fat-free or 1% milk, 100% fruit

or vegetable juice and water instead of soft drinks; include a vegetarian option at all meals.

Breakfast ideas

Whole grain muffins and breads instead of Danish, croissants or donuts; non-fat or low-fat yogurt; unsweetened cereals, granola and cereal bars (low-fat, high fiber); hard boiled eggs; fresh and/or dried fruit; light cream cheese, fruit spreads, jam or jelly.

Break or snack food ideas

Fresh and/or dried fruit or healthy trail mix; raw vegetables with low-fat dip, fat-free or low-fat dressing, salsa, bean dip; cheese cubes or slices; crackers, whole grain, low fat flavored rice cakes; pretzels with mustard; granola bars; hummus with pita bread wedges.



Lunch and dinner ideas

Low fat entrees – broiled, baked, grilled or steamed items; meat servings limited to 4oz. portions (fresh seafood, skinless poultry, lean meat); serve at least two vegetables with each meal; avoid butter or cream sauces; salads made with pasta, tofu, beans and/or raw or cooked vegetables; fat-free or low fat dressings on the side; sandwich bar with whole grain breads and rolls, low fat meats



and cheeses, and grilled vegetables and/or vegetable wraps; pasta dishes made with part skim mozzarella and part skim ricotta (e.g. pizza, lasagna); present sandwiches in halves.

Dessert ideas

Cut up fresh fruit with low-fat fruit yogurt dip; low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet; angel food cake with fruit topping.

Adapted by Susan Smith, NP, from:

University of Minnesota School of Public Health, *Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars, and Catered Events*; http://www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc_content/colleges/sph_news/Nutrition.pdf

CDC, *Healthier Worksite Initiative*; <http://cdc.gov/nccdphp/hwi/policies/healthy-worksite-food.pdf>

American Cancer Society, *Meeting Well - A Tool for Planning Healthy meetings and Events*

BERKSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEMS NEWS

BMC OPENS NEW OUTPATIENT IMAGING AND TESTING CENTER

Berkshire Medical Center has opened its new Outpatient Imaging & Testing Center in Pittsfield, providing state-of-the-art advanced imaging and pre-surgical assessment services. The new outpatient center is located at 610 North Street.

Advanced imaging services include diagnostic x-ray, ultrasound, high-speed CT scans, bone density testing and nuclear medicine testing. Berkshire Medical Center’s Pre-Surgical Assessment services have also relocated to the 610 North Street center, providing testing services for those who are scheduled for surgical procedures at BMC.

“This new outpatient center continues Berkshire Health Systems commitment to

providing the community with access to state-of-the-art imaging services,” said Curtis Brasseur, DO, Chairman of the Radiology Department. “Advanced imaging is evolving rapidly and BHS has continually invested in the latest technologies and procedures, which benefits our patients and the physicians who care for them.”

“It is important that we provide easy access to testing services for our surgical patients,” said Mark Vanden Bosch, MD, Chairman of Anesthesiology. “This new center is a convenient and comfortable place for our patients to receive their pre-surgical assessment services as they prepare for their procedures.”

The services provided at the BMC Outpatient Imaging & Testing Center are fully integrated into Berkshire Health Systems’ comprehensive electronic medical record system. This allows the patient’s physician instant and secure access to the patient’s test results in electronic format, eliminating the need for hard-film or paper results. Berkshire Health Systems is one of only ten hospital systems in the state of Massachusetts to have implemented a comprehensive electronic medical record system that includes Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE), promoting improved patient safety and care.

The 610 North Street location was fully renovated for the comfort and convenience of patients and has ample on-site parking.



WALK WITH ME IN THE BERKSHIRES

Berkshire Health Systems’ *Walk with Me in the Berkshires*, a community and BHS employee walking program, is now in its sixth year, with over 2,400 people enrolled to get out and walk for better health. The program



provides free pedometers and a step reporting system for participating walking teams, with the goal of increasing step counts each week throughout the six-week program.

There are two sides to the *Walk with Me* effort – a community component, with nearly 1,300 Berkshire area residents and a parallel BHS employee program, with over 1,200 participants from Berkshire Medical Center, Fairview Hospital, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association, BHS physician practices and BHS management. Since its inception, *Walk with Me* has grown over two-fold from its original 1,000 participants.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

E-mail: phaner@bhs1.org (Patricia Haner)

Mail: Berkshire Occupational Health, 165 Tor Court, Pittsfield, MA 01201 (attention Patricia Haner)



SAVE THE DATE!

You are invited to attend the upcoming **Workplace Health and Wellness Conference** on Thursday, May 29, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at BMC's Hillcrest Campus in Pittsfield.

The conference topics will include:

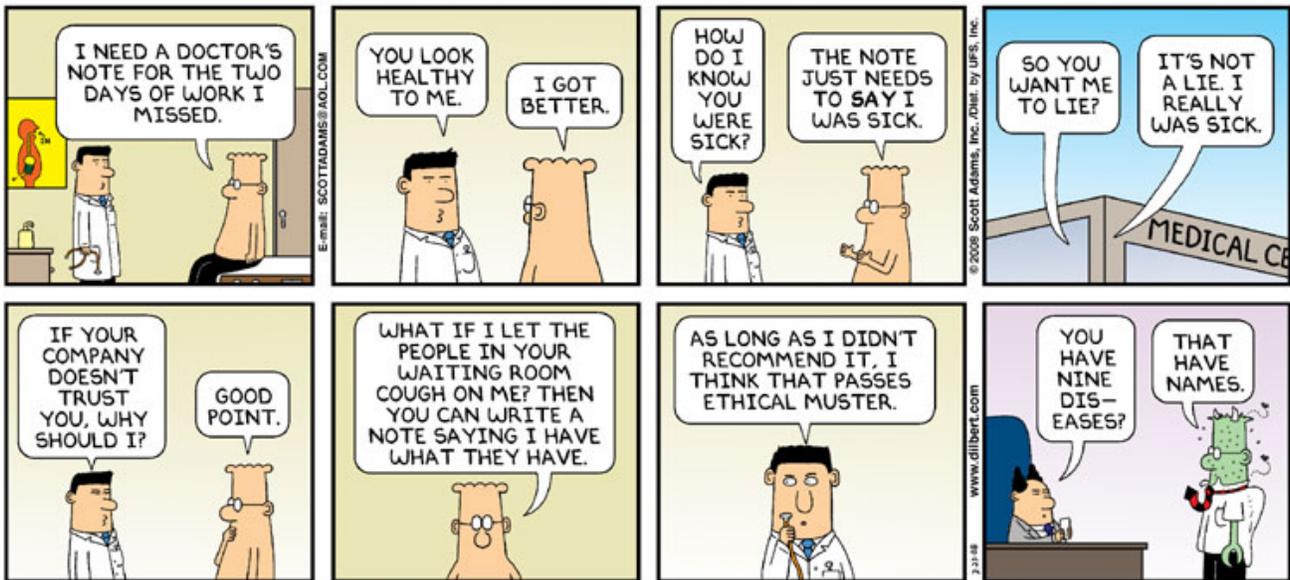
- Worker's Compensation
- Wellness at Work
- Occupational Medicine
- Physical Therapy
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Radiology

There is no charge to attend. For more information or to reserve your seat, please e-mail Pat Haner at phaner@bhs1.org.

We look forward to seeing you in May.

Patricia Haner, Program Manager,
On behalf of the BOH Team

LAUGHTER TIME



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