



Happy Thanksgiving!



# Insider News

## Keeping You On Top of Health & Safety

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## Bringing "Back" Safety to Work

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Workplace statistics show that next to the common cold, back problems are the leading cause of missed work in the United States. **Eight out of ten people will experience back pain at sometime in their lives** and it costs industry millions of dollars in lost productivity a year. Yet most back problems are preventable, and with an investment in education and training, businesses can save both money and morale.



The lower back is stressed by several such common work activities as forward bending, twisting, and lifting. Even sitting, which puts your lower back in a sustained forward bend, increases pressure on the spinal discs, weakens muscles and leads to unstable ligaments and joints. It's important to remember

that spinal parts need motion to increase circulation and maintain flexibility.

**A good ergonomics program in the workplace is a step in the right direction to reduce back stress and injury.** Ergonomics is the interaction between workers and their work environment. Whether your job is in a warehouse or factory or at a computer desk there are ways to improve your work space so that your daily activities don't cause injuries.

Conducting a job task and worksite analysis is the first step. Employers should look at recognizing, identifying and correcting all ergonomic hazards. Be sure to evaluate jobs that require frequent lifting, twisting, bent postures, or pushing or pulling. Once you've identified risky areas, redesign workstations and tasks for safer, more back-friendly activities.

Training and education are critical components of ergonomic programs for employees potentially exposed

to ergonomic and lifting hazards. Training should include identifying lifting hazards and using safe lifting techniques, as well as other ergonomic risk factors.

**For those employees who lift frequently:** size up the load before you lift. Test the weight, and if the object is too heavy or an odd shape, stop and ask for help. Consider using a mechanical lifting device or gloves, which will improve your grip and protect your hands. When lifting, keep your back straight or slightly arched. Always lift with your legs, as your leg muscles are about ten inches or wider than the very thin quarter- or half-inch layer of muscles along the back.

Investing five minutes of gentle stretching during and after work will pay off in the long run. Skipping this may cause a stiff back to heal improperly. Stretching your hamstrings, lower back, hips and abdominals at the end of the day will help your back regain its flexibility and strength.

## Using Hand Sanitizers to Fight Bacteria

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

The media and our experiences have shown us that hand sanitizers are an excellent method to prevent the onset of germs and illnesses such as the Swine Flu. Hand sanitizers now come in a convenient array of portable packaging and in a variety of scents, making it easy to change our behavior to become more self-aware of the various environments we touch while on-the-go. With the risk of the H1N1 flu, hand sanitizers are increasingly being placed in multiple locations from the entrances of supermarkets and churches, to our children's classrooms, and in gym

walkways. With such a new-found popularity and availability for use, let's take a closer look at the product:

### How a Hand Sanitizer Works

The primary component in hand sanitizer is alcohol, with most ranging in concentration between 60%-85% (the average is around 70%). When a hand sanitizer is used properly - the alcohol attacks bacteria cell membranes on the outer layer of your hands, destroying bacteria already attached and making an unfavorable environment for new bacteria. Although most bacteria on

your hands have been killed, keep in mind, there are still other forms residing on your hands and arms that can be harmful to your immune system. It is for that reason that hand



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**Did You Know?**

Hand Sanitizer manufacturers claim that their product can kill 99.9% of germs, however the product has not been tested on human hands due to the ethical safety restrictions of harmful bacteria on the skin.

The product has been tested to kill 99.9% of germs on inanimate (non-human) surfaces.

Both the CDC and the FDA recommend to use hand sanitizers as a supplement to health hygiene and to use hand sanitizers only when a soap/water are not available.

Source: "Hand Sanitizers and Soap and Water or Hand Sanitizer Alone." by JS Hibbard, Dateline

<http://www.e-commkitchen.com/Recipes/Articles/germout.htm>

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washing is a better method to prevent the contraction of germs.

### Hand Washing vs. Hand Sanitizers

The Center for Disease Control recommends using hand sanitizer only as a supplement to washing your hands with water and soap. Washing your hands with soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds can help prevent the contraction and spread of infection. Although this sounds simple, more than often, many people do not bring the soap to a full later and/or wash less than 15 seconds (if they wash their hands at all).

It's for this reason why hand sanitizers work as a compliment to keeping your hands protected against bacteria, however although they are simple and convenient to use – as mentioned, the in hand sanitizers does NOT kill all harmful bacteria that goes on your hands.

For germs contained in fecal matter, intestinal bacteria, dirt, blood and in common germs found in the kitchen such as E-coli, hand washing is more effective at the prevention of disease.

Washing your hands is best used in the restrooms, kitchens and in cleaning your hands before putting them near your mouth, eyes or nose. Hand sanitizers are best used in public areas where you see them most – in hallways, entrances and offices or when you are on the go – in cars, airplanes, or in areas away from sinks.

### How To Use Hand Sanitizer Properly

To effectively use a hand sanitizer, squirt a dime-sized amount on your hands and forearm and rub for at least 30 seconds. Rub around and under your fingernails, between your fingers, the back of our thumb and around the wrist. If the sanitizer

evaporates in less than 30 seconds, it will not be effective. If this happens, start over by adding more.

### What to Look for when Purchasing a Hand Sanitizer

Look for hand sanitizers with a concentration of 62% to 95% of ethanol or isopropanol (rubbing) alcohol. For health care settings, including hospitals, a concentration between 70% and 95% is recommended.

Many discounted brands are available on store shelves today offering as little as a 40% alcohol concentration, however this concentration has been proven to have no effect on combating germs on the surface of your hands.

Sources:  
Fox News "Fighting the Flu: Do Hand Sanitizers Work?" by Christopher Warjek. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,569965,00.html>  
"Uses of hand sanitizer soars with concern over swine flu." By Stephanie Desmon. The Baltimore Sun [http://www.baltimoresun.com/health/bal-md-hs-sanitizer?3sep23.0.1185523\\_story](http://www.baltimoresun.com/health/bal-md-hs-sanitizer?3sep23.0.1185523_story)

## Relax! Tips to Help You De-Stress

Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers

Stress is one of the most prevalent problems in modern life today. As a result, many people suffer from the effects of anxiety and stress which can include fatigue, depression, irritability, difficulty concentrating, problems sleeping and hypertension. While stress cannot be completely eliminated, it is possible to learn how to relax and effectively decrease your stress levels. This is an important goal as it can help you to reduce your chances of developing serious health conditions such as high blood pressure.



Yoga can be a very effective way to relax because it utilizes both an increased body awareness as well mental imagery. Begin by sitting in a quiet location in a cross legged position. Focus on relaxing every part of your body. You may find it helpful to begin with your feet and work your way upward. Next, focus on slowing down your breathing. This can be accomplished by taking deep breaths. Try to fill your lungs and then exhale completely. After you have established a breathing rhythm, guide your mind toward serenity and peacefulness. You might try imagining a place you find restful.

Many people also find journaling to be an effective way to relax. This technique allows you to release those thoughts and feelings which are often kept pent-up and can frequently exacerbate your stress levels. In addition, journaling also provides you with the opportunity to more deeply examine issues that could be at the crux of your stress.

Soothing sounds can be a good way to relax as well. The sounds that help you to relax may vary but could include the sounds of nature, wind chimes or even relaxing music.

Try taking a walk. Not only will the exercise and fresh air benefit you, but simply listening to the sounds of nature can also be refreshing and relaxing. Taking a walk by yourself also provides you with a few moments of uninterrupted time in which you can think about issues which may be bothering you.

Perhaps the most effective way to relax is to give yourself a break. In today's hectic modern life, this can be difficult. Taking even a five minute break and providing yourself with permission to do nothing can help to ease your stress. This 'down time' can be essential to coping with the stress of life.

While you may not be able to eliminate some of the sources of stress in your life, learning how to relax can help you to cope with them more effectively.



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*Written by: Grassroots Health*

Have you ever wondered why winter is the cold and flu season?

Have you wondered why colds and flu seem to affect countries of the same latitude?

**Many scientists believe that vitamin D in your body will keep your immune system healthy and keep colds and flu away**

**Are You vitamin D deficient?** Probably....

Last month we highlighted an article about vitamin D. The article stated that approximately 40-75% of the world population is vitamin D deficient.

**What is vitamin D deficiency?**

Vitamin D deficiency occurs when your serum 25 (OH) D is less than 40 ng/ml in your blood. A group of 33 independent scientists within the field of nutrition, oncology, and epidemiology have agreed that everyone should have

a vitamin D level between 40 and 60 ng/ml.

**How can you get more vitamin D?**

There are 2 primary ways to get vitamin D:

- **Through sunlight (with no sunscreen).** When in the sun, UVB rays will penetrate your body and create vitamin D. If it is summer and the rays are direct, and you are wearing shorts and a t-shirt; and are fairly light skinned - then about a half hour of exposure between the hours of 10 am and 2pm at a latitude of 36 degrees or south would generate 10,000 IU of vitamin D in your system. As you can see, this is hard to predict. The power of the sun (season, time of day) as well as the color of your skin (melanin functions as a light filter and reduces sun penetration) have huge effects on how much vitamin D is made by your body. Also, since most doctors advocate sunscreen usage, people have been inadvertently reducing their vitamin D levels.

- **Take vitamin D3 supplements.** Most pharmacies, drug stores, and even some grocery stores carry vitamin D3. The best way to figure out how much you need to take is to get your serum level measured. For people who haven't measured, 2000 IU/day was judged safe by the National Academy of Science.

**Will it really cure the common cold?**

Vitamin D affects over 3000 cells and processes within the body, many of them affecting your immune system. In a randomized controlled study of 208 African American women, those given just 800 IU/day were three times less likely to report cold and flu symptoms than the 104 placebo control group. But, what is most interesting is that in the last year of the study they increased the dosage. In that year, they gave the vitamin D group 2000 IU/day. The result was virtually no reported colds or flu from the vitamin D group!

*The D\*action project has as its purpose to serve as a model for public health action on vitamin D. It is a test bed for techniques, and for providing outcome evaluation at a community level.*

## Does Thanksgiving Dinner Make You Sleepy?

*Written by: I.F.—Staff Writers*

Thanksgiving is right around the corner and with it comes visiting family and friends, football on television and a big Thanksgiving dinner. We've all had that feeling to "lessen our belts a notch" after eating Thanksgiving dinner, but then we start to feel sleepy. What is it about Thanksgiving that makes us so tired?

Many people have pointed the finger at turkey as being the sole culprit at causing our Thanksgiving "food comas." Turkey contains the amino acid L tryptophan, which makes serotonin in our body - a natural method of encouraging our sleep. Tryptophan is also linked to metabolizing to melatonin, another neurotransmitter that causes sleep.

What happens when we eat turkey and other protein-rich foods on Thanksgiving is a competition for multiple amino acids to be transported from the bloodstream to the brain. In comparison with the other amino acids, Trpthonan has the least likely chance to reach the brain. Henceforth, as previously though, we do not receive an overload of serotonin from simply eating turkey.

So why do we get sleepy after eating our Thanksgiving dinner? The answer probably lies within four major causes that we typically do not consider when taking that extra bite of pumpkin pie.

**Fats**

The fats we ingest on Thanksgiving slow down our digestive system - in return, it takes our body a lot of time to digest. Because of this process, our blood is redirected to help the digestive system out causing you to feel less energetic.

**Overeating**

When we eat turkey combined with other carbohydrate-rich Thanksgiving foods, our brains do react with an increase of serotonin.

**Alcohol**

Washing down dinner with a glass of beer or glass containing alcohol slows down your nervous system, creating a depressant.

**Relaxation**

Having the chance to un-wind has multiple benefits to your health: Thanksgiving is a tradition to spend time with family and friends and while eating a good meal.



Sources:  
 "Does Turkey Make You Sleepy?" by Anne Marie Helmenstine, <http://chemistry.about.com/od/holidayseasons/a/tiredturkey.htm>

"Does Turkey Make You Sleepy? By Coco Ballantyne, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=fact-or-fiction-does-turkey-make-you-sl>

# Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

Written by: I.F.–Staff Writers

With the recent passing of Patrick Swayze from Pancreatic Cancer, a new wave of attention is being focused on understanding the illness. We have heard that Pancreatic Cancer is often a problematic disease to identify, as the symptoms don't show until it's well advanced. At that time, it's often too late to treat through surgery – making it a terminal disease, and a leading cause of all cancer deaths.

Pancreatic Cancer begins when abnormal, or mutated cells grow uncontrollably in the pancreas and form a tumor. Depending on the location of the tumor depends on the type of Pancreatic Cancer that is diagnosed. Nearly 95% of all types of Pancreatic Cancer tumors begin in the ducts where exocrine cells help to produce digestive juices. The other 5% are called endocrine tumors and are related to hormones such as insulin, glucagon and somatostatin that control the amount of sugar in the blood.

Although little is known about the cause of Pancreatic Cancer, the following risk factors are potentially linked to the disease (as cited from the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network):

- **Smoking** – Smoking is the cause of about 25% of all cancer cases. People who smoke cigarettes are 2 times more likely to develop the cancer than those that do not smoke
- **Age** – The risk of developing the cancer

increase with age. Most people diagnosed are over 60

- **Family History** – The risk for developing the disease increases by 2-3 times if a person's parents, sibling or child has had Pancreatic Cancer. The risk increases if there is a history of familial breast or colon cancer, familial melanoma, or hereditary pancreatitis
- **Chronic Pancreatitis and Hereditary Pancreatitis** – Those living with pancreatitis, especially those diagnosed at a younger age have an increased risk of developing pancreatic cancer
- **Race** – African Americans have a higher diagnosis rate of pancreatic cancer compared to Asian, Hispanic or Caucasian descent
- **Diabetes** – Those people who are living with diabetes are 2 times more likely to have Pancreatic Cancer occur

If any of these risk factors apply to you, familiarize yourself for the list of Pancreatic Cancer symptoms listed on the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network— otherwise known as PanCan ([www.pancan.com](http://www.pancan.com)).

As in the prevention of many diseases, we can decrease the risk of Pancreatic Cancer and other diseases by watching our diet and eating healthy, exercising regularly and decreasing the amount of stress on our bodies.

Mayo Clinic. Pancreatic Cancer. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/pancreatic-cancer/DS00357>



## Black Friday Shopping Safety

Written by: I.F.–Staff Writers

The turkey leftovers are in the fridge. The alarm is set. Is your family ready to brave the Black Friday (day after Thanksgiving) shopping rush? Kicking off the Christmas

shopping season, millions of people camp, run and wait for extended periods of time to find a parking spot, good sales and wrapped presents. Unfortunately, with such excitement comes the risk for high stress or even injury. Last year in Valley Stream, N.Y. a 34-year old Wal-Mart employee was trampled to death after a rush of over 2,000 shoppers into the store.

Although the odds may be great in getting severely injured while shopping on Black Friday, there are some tips to keep you and your family safe this November 27<sup>th</sup>.

- **Don't Forget Your Cell Phone** Cell phones have become a staple to our daily lifestyles, however there is always that incidence of "forgetting your cell phone at home," especially when waking up early. Make sure it's charged and in a handy place before leaving to go shopping.
- **Watch Your Shopping Load** Carrying too many shopping bags makes you easily targeted for a crime. Not only do the bags slow you down, but they also

draw attention in a darkened parking lot. If you or your family will be doing a lot of shopping, take trips to the car to drop off bags.

- **Watch Your Wallet** Amidst the crowds and noise, pickpockets and purse thieves can easily target opened purses on Black Friday. With chilly temperatures, it's easy for a pickpocket to disguise snatching a wallet underneath a carried jacket. You can decrease the chances of being a target by carrying your wallet, cards and/or money in front pockets, or by wearing a purse over your body, with a sturdy strap.
- **Avoid the ATM** Criminals will be targeting ATMs for their large pouring of money on Black Friday. If you must withdrawal cash, go through drive-thru ATMs. Try not to use the ATM inside the mall or in any opportunity you will be standing alone.
- **Shop Together** Shopping with family or friends decreases the likelihood of falling target to a crime. Plus, it makes the day more fun!

Source: Associated Content. Black Holiday Shopping Safety. [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1241064/black\\_friday\\_shopping\\_safety\\_tips.html?cat=46](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1241064/black_friday_shopping_safety_tips.html?cat=46)

### Did You Know: Facts About Pancreatic Cancer

It is estimated that 42,470 people will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year; over 35,000 are estimated to die of the cancer this year

The average age of pancreatic cancer is between 65 and 74 (the median age is 72)

**Only 7% of pancreatic cancer cases are diagnosed before the tumor has spread**

Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer-related death in men and women

After diagnosis the average life expectancy is 3 to 6 months (however, this varies according to the stage the cancer is in; typically this is assigned only when the tumor has spread)

Only 4% of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer survive within 5 years

Sources:  
Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results: Pancreas, <http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/pancreas.html>

Pancreatic Tumors. <http://www.pancreatic-tumors.com>

**Do you have a health-related question that needs answering?**

**E-mail us your ideas and questions!**

**newsletter@  
injuryfree.com**



**20250 144th Ave NE #305**

**Woodinville, WA 98072**

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