Safety Matters

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News & Notes

EYES DRY AND FEELING GRITTY?

If you work on a computer all day, you could be at risk for *dry eye syndrome* (DES). DES is just what it sounds like—a lack of natural moisture in the eyes.

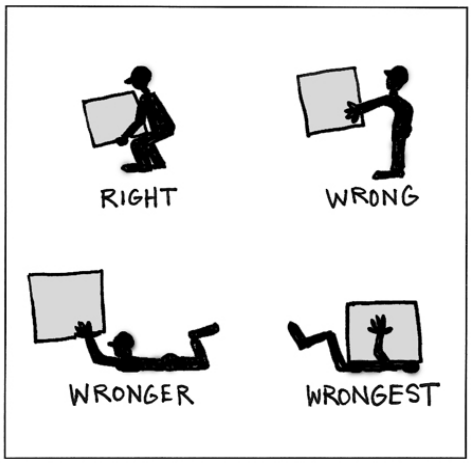
The result is redness, itching, burning, blurred vision, a sensation of grittiness, or even the frightening feeling of a sharp object stuck in the eye. DES primarily affects people tied to computer screens in climate-controlled offices.

Reports indicate some 9 million to 10 million Americans have been diagnosed with chronic DES, and many more sufferers have symptoms on an occasional basis. More women than men seem to suffer with it, especially women going through menopause.

What can you do about DES?

- **Drink lots of water!** Nothing else keeps the body's water supply replenished.
- **Blink more often!** And close your eyes for 10 seconds every 5 to10 minutes. This allows the moisture to build up again.
- **Put a humidifier on your workstation** to add moisture to the air around you.
- **Take frequent breaks** from computer work.
- **Switch from contact lenses to regular eyeglasses** when you're at work. Free flow of moisture over the eye trumps vanity.
- **Moisten your eyes periodically** throughout the workday with eyedrops.

If these steps fail, see your doctor. He or she can prescribe special eye drops or an ointment to use before bed.



THANKSGIVING RIDDLES:

1). Why was the quarterback crying during the game?

2). What is the sleepiest thing at the Thanksgiving table?

3). Why did Mom save some turkey for tomorrow?

Answers on page 2 in **Safety Bits and Pieces**.

Right or Wrong Moves?

Rate your lifting and carrying technique

When you're lifting and carrying heavy objects, one wrong move could mean a painful strain. So take a few minutes now to rate your technique. For each of the questions, rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Never, 2 means Rarely, 3 means Sometimes, 4 means Usually, and 5 means Always.

• Do you examine an object before you lift it?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you plan a move before you lift?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you check out your route to look for obstacles?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you face the load with your feet shoulder-width apart?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you keep your heels down and your feet pointed out?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you squat by bending at the knees as opposed to keeping knees locked and bending at the waist?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you grasp the load firmly with both hands and slide it close to your body?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you use your leg and stomach—as opposed to your back—muscles to power the lift?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you raise the load slowly, keeping your head up?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you make sure you can see over the load before you move with it?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you walk slowly and look where you're going?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you hug the load to reduce strain on your back?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you turn your body as a single unit when making turns as opposed to twisting?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you reverse the lifting process when you unload by bending at the knees and slowly lowering the load?	1	2	3	4	5
• Do you grip the load on its sides as you lower so that you don't pinch your fingers as you put it down?	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL SCORE: _____

How do you rate?

If you scored anything over 70, you've got a great, safe lifting and carrying technique. A score between 60 and 70 means you're doing a good job, but you need to brush up on your technique. A score less than 60 but more than 45 isn't very good. You could be looking at an injury soon. Anything less than 45 and you need to improve your lifting and carrying technique right now.

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

When you use your fireplace or wood stove to heat your home, keep the door and or fire screen shut to protect your home from sparks. Only burn dry seasoned wood, never rubbish. Garbage and green wood can cause a chimney fire.

Remember to have your chimney inspected and serviced before each heating season and change the batteries in your smoke alarms too. A working smoke alarm could save your life.

Safety Bits & Pieces

INSURANCE COVERAGE OFFICE

Did you know that the Insurance Coverage Office offers a wide variety of safety and risk management services to state agencies upon request by the agency? These services range from training programs designed to fit the agency's needs to property risk management evaluations and services. ICO Risk Management professionals are available to assist all state agencies in developing and implementing a safety/risk managment program that is both effective and appropriate for the needs of the agency. For additional information please contact the Insurance Coverage Office at 877-277-4185 or 302-739-3651 or email us at inscov@state.de.us.

THANKSGIVING FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Practice these safe food preparation procedures to reduce the risk of food borne illness:

Purchase only government-inspected meat and poultry. Check the date on the package.

Never thaw a turkey at room temperature because this promotes the growth of dangerous bacteria. Allow 1 day refrigerator thawing for every four pounds of turkey.

Wash hands thoroughly before and after preparing any food products.

Never cook a stuffed turkey or chicken in a microwave oven. Microwaves don't distribute the heat evenly, leaving pockets of cold inside the poultry.

Use a cooking thermometer to determine if the turkey is fully cooked. The meat should reach 180F, and if the bird is stuffed the stuffing should be 165F.

Don't allow left over food to sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours. Refrigerate promptly.

Never taste food that looks or smells strange. When in doubt, throw it out.

WHAT'S THE SAFEST ANSWER?

Which of these incidents should you report?

1. An accident in which someone is hurt
2. An accident in which no one is hurt and nothing is damaged
3. A near miss

Report all three so we can prevent future accidents.

THANKSGIVING RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1). Because he was playing foot-*bawl*.

2). *Nap*-kin.

3). She didn't want it to go to *waist*.

Put Wheels Under the Load

Use material-handling equipment

Material-handling equipment can help you safely move heavy and awkward-sized loads, and save your back in the process. There may still be some lifting to get the load onto the equipment, but then you don't have to lug it to your destination. Follow these tips for working with manual material-handling aids:

- ⇨ **Choose the right equipment for the job.** For example, an ordinary hand truck is fine for a load of heavy cartons, but you'll need a curved-bed hand truck for barrels and drums. A cart or dolly might be better for other loads.
- ⇨ **Place heavy objects on the bottom** of material-handling equipment and lighter ones on top for a stable stack.
- ⇨ **Secure bulky, loose, or delicate objects** so they can't tumble off.
- ⇨ **Push rather than pull the load forward** with the strength of your legs and upper body. Maintain a firm grip with buttocks out, back relaxed and comfortably straight, and knees slightly bent. Your hands should be between your upper thigh and chest when pushing.

If the load is too heavy for manual lifting aids, you need to use a forklift, a pallet jack, a hoist, or some other powered equipment to lift and move it.

On the Lighter Side

May your stuffing be tasty,
may your turkey be plump.
May your potatoes 'n gravy
have nary a lump,
May your yams be delicious,
May your pies take the prize,
May your Thanksgiving dinner
Stay off of your thighs.
Gobble til you wobble….
And in all and for all things give thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving!!!!

Quotations of the Month

If there is righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation, there
will be peace in the world.
Chinese Proverb

The simple step of a courageous
individual is not to take part in the lie.
One word of truth outweighs the world.
Alexander Solzhenitsyn

What to Watch Out For

Top 10 most disabling workplace injuries

The Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety releases an annual Workplace Safety Index that identifies the top 10 most disabling workplace injuries for that year. The most recent list includes the following injuries:

1. Overexertion—injuries caused by excessive lifting, pushing, or pulling
2. Falls on the same level
3. Falls to a lower level
4. Bodily reaction—sprains and strains from slipping or tripping without actually falling
5. Struck by an object
6. Highway incidents
7. Repetitive motion
8. Struck against an object
9. Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects
10. Assaults and other violent acts

You can boil that list down a little further to seven basic work-related safety hazards—overexertion, falls, impact, amputation/crushing, repetitive motion, traffic accidents, and workplace violence.

If you face any of these hazards on the job, be extra cautious every day. The injuries that can result from these hazards are often serious, and sometimes fatal.