



## Bacteria or virus - why does it matter?

Bacteria and viruses can both cause infections and fever. But, it is important to know the difference between the two because only bacterial infections can be treated by antibiotics. With cold and flu season upon us, brush up on your bacteria and virus facts so you will know what to do if you or your family gets sick.

**Bacteria – what am I dealing with?** Bacteria are single-celled organisms, most of which do not cause any harm to people. Many are good bacteria, including some that live in your intestines and help digest food. Some bacteria can cause infections like pneumonia, strep throat, and tonsillitis.

**Bacteria – what do I do?** See your doctor who will confirm if you have a bacterial infection before prescribing antibiotics. Antibiotics are medications that work against bacteria by either killing them or stopping them from multiplying. It is important to take antibiotics exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider to help prevent antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change



so that the antibiotics used to treat the bacteria become less effective and sometimes do not work at all. Do not share your antibiotics with anyone and return unused medicine to the pharmacy for safe disposal.

**Virus – what am I dealing with?** Viruses need living hosts to survive. Many common infections are actually caused by viruses. We are all-too-

familiar with coronavirus but we should not forget about other viral infection illnesses like the common cold, flu, and chickenpox. Viral infections often get better without antibiotic treatment, and some can also be preventable by a vaccine. If symptoms persist and you are concerned, talk to your healthcare provider.

**Virus – what do I do?** Viruses are self-limiting illnesses, meaning they usually get better on their own with time and rest. Ask a healthcare provider such as a pharmacist to recommend ways to reduce pain, fever, and other symptoms associated with viral infections. Remember that

antibiotics treat bacterial infections but are not effective against viral infections. The best way to treat a viral infection is to rest and drink fluids, and to get vaccinated.

Find more information at [canada.ca/antibiotics](http://canada.ca/antibiotics).



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Smart Workplace

health and safety communications partners

**Publisher & CEO:** Stefan Dreesen

**H&S Communication Specialists:**

Alan Haycroft | Liz Slobodin | Kevin Harvey

**Editor:** Kate Van Hoof-Peeren

**Contributing Writer:** Bryden Winsby

**TOLL FREE:** 1-888-655-4800

[info@smartworkplace.ca](mailto:info@smartworkplace.ca)

[www.smartworkplace.ca](http://www.smartworkplace.ca)

# Personal safety tips for when you're out and about

(NC) Whether you are returning home from the late shift or just out for a night on the town, the dark days of winter and early spring and unpredictable weather conditions make personal safety a big priority this time of year.

**Here are some tips to help you feel more secure when you are out and about:**

## Remember the basics

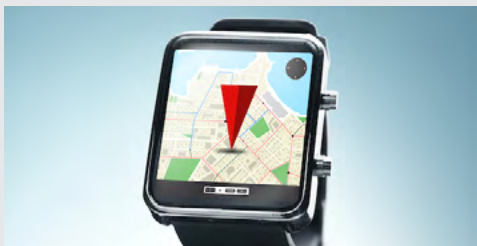
There are some general safety best-practices everyone should know, such as staying aware of your surroundings. Speak with your family, colleagues and loved ones about safety and talk about household safety rules you want to follow, such as locking your front door even when you're home.

## Plan your route to and from home

Planning ahead is key to optimizing your safety as you go from work events to dinners or parties, and back home this season. Figure out how you are getting from A to B before you leave the house and always share your whereabouts with a friend or loved one. Rather than going alone, use ridesharing with friends and co-workers when possible. It not only ups your safety but often cuts down on transportation costs.

## Consider smart tech options

While the days are getting longer, evening and early morning commutes can still be in the dark. Consider discreet wearable personal safety devices that are disguised as necklaces, bracelets and keychains. These devices can instantly text your GPS location to select contacts or help connect you with emergency services, saving valuable time.



# Protect your home while you're away

(NC) After a couple of months cooped up indoors, many of us are ready to get on the move. Whether we're visiting friends and family or simply seeking warmer temperatures, here are some tips to keep yourself, your loved ones, and your home safe while you're away. The following suggestions may seem simple, and you might be thinking if a thief really wants to break in, it won't matter anyways. But keep in mind that thieves are human, and humans usually prefer the "path of least resistance". Putting obstacles in their way can make them move on to an easier target.

## Plan for your mail

A pile of packages outside your door is a clear sign to would-be thieves that no one is home. Ask a trusted neighbour to collect it or get Canada Post to hold your mail until you return. Better yet, don't order anything online that is likely to arrive while you are away. This gives you peace of mind knowing that nothing will pile up while you're gone.

## Add entryway cameras

Installing cameras at your front and back entrances allows you to easily check in on what's happening outside your home. There are also a variety of doorbells available that come equipped with a camera that records when there is movement at your front door. They are easy to install, and you can keep track of movements at your front door from an app you can install on your phone. Security signs on your front lawn and

cameras are also known to deter criminals since they don't want to risk exposure and getting caught. And the front door or back door lamp that springs on when there is movement? Consider getting one. It's yet another deterrent that would-be thieves will likely avoid.

## Lights, sound, and movement

It's obvious no one's home when the lights don't turn on for hours or days on end, especially in the dark winter months. Set up your most-used lights on timers to go on and off at typical times of day so no one can tell you're not there. Another idea is to have your neighbour or a relative drop into your home at different times and turn lights on and off, open and close drapes, and perhaps sit for an hour to watch some TV or listen to some music. Make sure the schedule is not regular. Also consider keeping a talk radio station on while you are gone. Hearing voices from inside your home may deter a would-be thief.

## Revisit your social media approach

You may love to post about special occasions on social media, but it's important to be careful of how much you share and when. Before you depart, look through your feed for any posts that give out personal information about your habits and your home – even a street name or house number. Consider waiting until you get home to post about vacation activities and be sure to disable geotagging in your settings.

The material contained in this document has been prepared from sources believed to be accurate and reliable. Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a safety professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at his/her own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner. Thanks to News Canada for some content and images. © 2023

# Know how to respond to emergencies at work

Being prepared for an emergency at home is an excellent course of action but remember that disaster can strike even when you are at work. Knowing what to do and what your role is in your company's emergency plan is extremely important. You should be aware of your company's procedures and where to go should you hear that alarm sound.

An emergency at work is not only limited to when a fire breaks out. There may be different procedures for other situations, such as an extreme weather event, a bomb threat, or unfortunately, an active threat to your personal security such as an armed intruder. You have a responsibility to yourself to be aware of what to do under these circumstances. If you are not sure, ask your supervisor. Having an emergency preparedness plan is required by law in Canada.

If you were required to shelter in place or evacuate from your current location, would you be ready? You may want to make sure you have the following supplies packed and ready to go at if you are faced with an emergency at work:

Keep a pair of comfortable walking shoes at your desk and be prepared for all seasons. Have a coat, hat, gloves or boots available no matter what time of year.

Consider keeping a change of clothes, or socks and underwear stashed nearby.

Carry some emergency cash. ATMs might not work during emergencies. You will need cash for necessities.

Cell phones may not work. Have a designated spot for your family to meet. Make sure every family member is aware of this spot and stress the importance of staying put until everyone is together.

Pack some emergency food such as jerky, granola bars, nuts or fruit rollups.

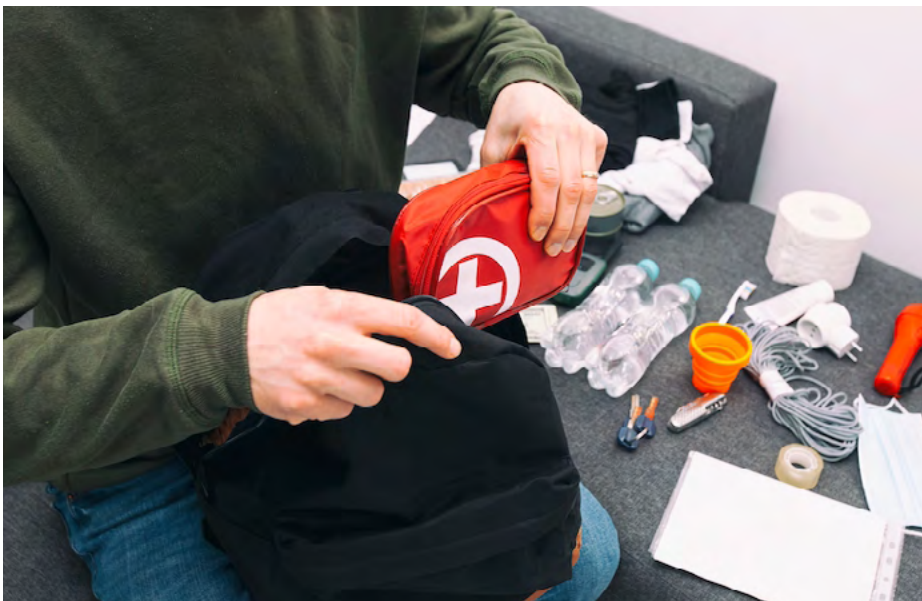
Include a flashlight and pack extra batteries.

Pack an extra mobile charger, a signal whistle, and an emergency multi-powered radio. Include a pencil and notebook.

You may want to pack some time passers such as a deck of cards, a book or even a game.

Take photos of your important papers, encrypt them, and store them with a reputable cloud service.

Keep a list of emergency and non-emergency numbers. Include address and email cell phone and regular phone numbers.



## Dealing with bomb threats

Bomb threats are a serious threat to any workplace. While many turn out to be hoaxes, you should never dismiss it if you should answer the phone and the person on the other end is threatening to blow up the building.

If you receive a bomb threat, stay calm and try to get as much information as possible. Although this might be difficult, try to note any unique features about the voice and any background sounds you hear over the telephone. Keep the caller on the line as long as possible and take detailed notes about what is said.

### Getprepared.gc.ca offers the following suggestions:

- Take note if the speaker is male or female, or if the speaker has a distinctive accent. Is the voice disguised, muffled or strange sounding? Is the voice shrill or deep?
- Listen for any background noises such as traffic, a bus passing, a bell ringing, or printer sounds. Listen for indoor vs. outdoor sounds.
- Call the police and building management immediately after you hang up.

If you have been notified of a bomb threat, do not touch any suspicious package. If a suspicious package is found, leave the area, and notify the police immediately.

If you have been evacuated from a building, avoid standing in front of windows or other potentially hazardous areas. Do not block the sidewalk or street. It will need to be kept clear for emergency officials.

In the case of an explosion, get out of the building as quickly and calmly as possible. If items are falling off bookshelves or from the ceiling, get under a sturdy table or desk until the situation has stabilized enough for your safe passage. Ensure your own safety before trying to help others.

**Making a bomb threat is a criminal offence. Do not try to guess whether the threat is real or a hoax. Call the police.**



# Hantavirus illness rare, but can be very nasty

Although it doesn't occur often in this country, hantavirus infection can cause severe illness and possibly death.

In Canada, the virus has been found only in wild mice, specifically the deer mouse. Other rodents, such as house mice, roof rats and Norway rats are not known to spread the virus.

Hantavirus is spread mostly when mouse droppings, urine, saliva or nesting materials are disturbed, sending virus particles into the air where they can be breathed in. In rare cases, it may be spread through small breaks in the skin when handling a wild mouse, or by mouse bites.

**The disease — Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) —** cannot be caught from domestic pets, and in North America there is no evidence it spreads from person to person. There is no vaccine for hantavirus infection.

Certain activities could mean a higher risk of getting infected with HPS, such as cleaning unused buildings and working in construction, utilities and pest control.

Workers and homeowners can be exposed in crawl spaces, under houses, or in vacant or occasional use buildings, such as cottages, trailers and garden sheds, that may have mice.

Clean-up procedures must be performed in a way that limits the amount of airborne dust. All mice and droppings should be treated as being potentially infected.

Ventilate the space for at least 30 minutes before activities begin and keep it ventilated while cleaning and before re-entry. If there is reason to suspect that rodents have access to heating and cooling ventilation systems, contact a professional rodent exterminating service or qualified ventilation professional.

People involved in general clean-up activities where there is not heavy accumulation of droppings should wear disposable protective clothing and gloves, rubber boots and a disposable N95 respirator. For cleaning up rodent contaminated areas with heavy accumulations of droppings it is necessary to use powered air-purifying (PARP) or air-supplied respirators with P100 filters and eye or face protection to avoid contact with any aerosols.

Dead mice, nests and droppings should be soaked thoroughly with a solution that is 1 part sodium hypochlorite (household bleach) to 10 parts water, or a household disinfectant. Allow the solution or disinfectant to soak on the droppings, nest or dead mice for around 5 minutes before beginning cleaning.

Clean with disposable mops or towels. Launder or steam-clean objects made of cloth, such as furniture, carpets, clothes, bedding, toys, etc. Do not use a vacuum or sweep in a way that may create an airborne dust.

Ultraviolet rays in sunlight will also inactivate hantavirus. For books, papers and other non-washable items that cannot be cleaned or thrown away, place the object in sunlight for several hours, or in an area free of rodents, for approximately a week.

Contaminated material should be placed in a plastic bag and sealed for disposal. Disinfect reusable personal protective equipment by wet-wiping all respirator surfaces, gloves, rubber boots and goggles with disinfectant. All disposable protective clothing, gloves and respirators should be placed in plastic bags and sealed for disposal.

## To wash or not to wash clothes after one wear

Thanks to TikTok, a recent hot debate took place on the social media platform about how often pyjamas or other clothing should be washed. Not knowing when to wash your clothes can have consequences on both ends of the spectrum. Washing them too seldom could lead to skin problems or infections and washing them too often could harm your clothing. The latter can also result in unnecessary laundry and use of resources.

There's no hard and fast rule for how many times you can wear clothing again, but dermatologists say there are a few types that should be washed after every use: underwear, socks, tights, leggings and activewear. This advice also applies to any other clothes with stains, sweat, odour or visible dirt. For example, if your job consists largely of physical labour and you sweat a lot, you should wash your work clothes regularly. If you work around hazardous substances, you should wear protective clothing to protect your regular clothes such as coveralls or an apron.

In addition to bacteria from sweat, clothes worn in gyms or sports settings can come into contact with bacteria such as *Staphylococcus aureus*, resulting in infections common in community and hospital settings. Those infections can become serious if they enter internal tissues or the bloodstream.

For pyjamas, outerwear, jeans and other clothes, how many times you can wear them without washing is based on the same principles for undergarments or activewear. If you wear an undershirt, for example, that would be something to wash, whereas your top shirt doesn't really need to be washed. If you don't wear undershirts or underwear, you should wash your clothing before wearing it again.

The most important questions you should ask yourself, experts say, when considering whether to wear something again without washing are these: Does it smell? Do I have any skin conditions, such as eczema, a rash or a skin lesion? Is it visibly dirty? Is it sweaty? Did I wear underwear with this?

## Ways to prevent food poisoning

(NC) Did you know that about one in eight Canadians get sick every year from foodborne illness? Many of these cases go unreported because symptoms are similar to those of the stomach flu. The most common symptoms are stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, body aches and fever.

**Fortunately, most cases of food poisoning can be easily prevented by following a few simple steps:**

**1. Clean.** Clean anything that comes into contact with food, including your hands, kitchen surfaces and utensils, and reusable grocery bags. Use soap and warm water to wash your hands. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Fruits and vegetables should also be washed under running water that's safe to drink.

**2. Separate.** To avoid cross-contamination, always separate raw foods like raw meat and eggs from ready-to-eat foods like cooked meat and vegetables. Put raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood in sealed containers, or in plastic bags on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator. That way their juices won't drip onto other food.

**3. Cook.** Always cook food to a safe internal temperature. You can check this by using a digital food thermometer. Meat, poultry, fish and seafood should be cooked within two to three days of purchase. If you don't plan to cook it within this time, it should be frozen. Remember, you can't tell if food is safe by its smell, taste or colour. When in doubt, throw it out.

**4. Chill.** One of the most important things to remember is to keep cold food cold and hot food hot. This keeps it from reaching the "temperature danger zone" between 4°C and 60°C (40°F and 140°F). Defrost raw meat, poultry and fish in the refrigerator or the microwave, or immerse it in cold water that's replaced every 30 minutes. Never defrost at room temperature. Foods defrosted in the microwave should be cooked immediately. Don't refreeze thawed food.



## Monitoring tread wear key to tire safety

As the tires on a vehicle shed their tread over thousands of kilometres of use, they become less effective and less safe.

Knowing when it's time to replace them requires some basic knowledge to avoid doing so too late and putting safety at risk or too soon and wasting money.

A tire's tread has three main sections: the outer shoulder, contact patch and inner shoulder. Spanning the tire's circumference are deep grooves — called channels — that separate the tread.

The outer shoulder is the outermost section of the tire and is outside of the last channel. On the opposite edge of the outer shoulder is the inner shoulder.

The contact patch is the area between the two shoulders — it's the tire's main contact point with the road. This is the area where the tread blocks are thickest and where to measure the tire tread depth.

Determining a tire's tread depth involves measuring from the lowest point in the channel to the top of the tread on the contact patch. This depth is important because the channels are responsible for shuttling water and slush away from the contact patch to maximize traction. If the tread isn't deep enough, the channels will be too shallow to move water and slush effectively, reducing traction and increasing the risk of hydroplaning on wet roads.

**There are three main ways to measure tread depth:**

**Indicator bars.** These are small, raised bars that span the channels. If the tire tread wears to the point that it's even with the wear bars, the tires need replacing.

**Coin test.** Hold a quarter or nickel between your thumb and forefinger and place the coin inside the channel, with the top of the figurehead's head facing the tire. If

any portion of the tread is covering the figurehead, you have a safe amount of tread remaining on the tire. If the full figurehead is exposed, it's time for new tires.

Tires should always be checked in several places as they don't always wear evenly.

**Depth gauge.** The most accurate way to check tire tread, it has a blade side that looks similar to a flat-head screwdriver and a gauge side with either a manual gauge with measurement marks on it or a digital readout.

Fully extend the blade side and place the blade into a channel between two tread blocks on the contact patch. Slide the gauge toward the tread until the gauge's flanges rest on the tread blocks on the contact patch. Read the measurement on the gauge.

Repeat the measurement on several parts of the contact patch to ensure there are no low spots.

Canadian law requires a minimum tread depth of 1.6 millimeters, but some provinces have even stricter requirements. Also, tire experts often note the legal minimums aren't always the safest and many will recommend replacing them when existing tires reach 3.175 mm of tread (3.96 mm for snow tires).

**Here are some more tire safety tips:**

- **Check pressure at least monthly.** Incorrect tire pressure can cause uneven tire wear, poor handling, excessive heat build-up, and possible tire failure.

- **Rotate tires to increase life.** Follow the rotation schedule in the vehicle owner's manual.

- **Keep tires balanced and aligned.** Improperly balanced tires can produce an uneven ride that results in poor handling. Defective alignment can cause excessive tire wear and the vehicle to pull to the side.

## Time to break bad online habits

Checking your bank balance while using free public Wi-Fi, downloading files from sketchy websites, and, of course, creating easy-to-guess passwords because “no one cares about hacking my accounts” are some bad habits you should try to break. Your identity can be stolen within seconds and whether you have \$100 or \$20,000 in your personal bank account, someone can become you and run up bad debts in your name which could take years to clear up.

**Here are some security errors and ways to fix them according to NordVPN.com:**

### 1. Not using two-factor authentication

If passwords are the first line of defence for your online accounts, then two-factor authentication (2FA) is the second. If your password is exposed in a data breach, 2FA prevents hackers from accessing your accounts using the leaked password.

How does it work? After you enter your password, your account requires a one-time passcode or other confirmation (e.g., clicking on a notification) that you, not someone else, are accessing the account. Two-factor authentication is available on most online services.

Enable 2FA on your accounts whenever it's available. Usually, you can do so by visiting security settings on any particular website or using a third-party app, such as Google Authenticator.

### 2. Ignoring software updates

Many people find software updates annoying. No wonder – updates tend to pop up exactly when you don't have time to deal with them. So you hit the “postpone” button, thinking you will get back to the updates later. But then you forget, or keep postponing

Keeping programs up to date is crucial to staying protected from malicious threats. Hackers love to exploit vulnerabilities in software and apps, especially those with many users, like browsers. Companies usually fix the issues immediately by releasing a patch in the form of a software update. But if you don't install the update, the vulnerability is still accessible on your device, and you're left exposed.

If you don't feel like checking for updates, enable automatic updates on your applications. And think twice next time you want to click “postpone.”



## Seasonal home safety checklist

Whatever the season, make sure you know the risks in your area so you can properly prepare your home for them. Do you live near a river that floods in your area every spring? Or are you at risk for wildfires in summer? Are you likely to face severe winter storms or power outages in winter?

A little preparation can help you be ready for just about anything.

**To help keep your home running smoothly, here's when to tackle some important home safety tasks.**

### Winter wonderland

- Look for bare patches on your roof after a snowfall to see if your roof or attic insulation may need repair.
- Check for water leaks indoors during minor thaws to get ahead of water damage and mould.
- Test for high levels of radon gas in your home with a simple DIY test, or call in a pro.
- Make sure important documents are stored off the floor and not in the basement ahead of spring thaws and floods.

### Spring showers

- Refresh your emergency kit if needed, and add any season-specific items, such as a battery-operated fan if you lose air conditioning in a summer power outage.
- Angle your downspouts away from your home to prevent flood damage.
- Consider adding a sump pump with backup power or reverse-flow valves in basement drains.
- Clear gutters and debris left over from winter storms and do time-sensitive repairs.

- Inspect your roof and repair any damage.
- Consider applying sealant around basement windows and at the base of exterior doors.
- Check your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms each spring and fall.

### Sunny summer

- Do more extensive safety updates in summer when weather is clear, such as fixing a leaky foundation.
- Ensure that your landscaping is graded to slope away from your home.
- Trim any trees or bushes that are getting close to power lines.
- Check your ventilation by holding a tissue up to your bathroom fan – the suction should cause it to noticeably flutter.
- Run a dehumidifier to prevent mould if you live in a humid place or detect a musty smell.

### Fall fixes

- Winterize or drain outdoor faucets and pipes ahead of cold weather to avoid frozen, burst pipes.
- Check and replace weatherstripping to ensure your home is protected from the elements.
- Clear your eavestroughs and downspouts of leaves and debris.
- Refresh your emergency kit with supplies to last you for several days.
- Confirm that your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are in good working order and replace the backup batteries.

Find out about your regional risks and learn more safety tips at [getprepared.ca](http://getprepared.ca).

## Health

# Amp up your iron for cold season

Cold, dark winter days make keeping up our mental and physical energy a challenge. That's why it's especially important to ensure you're getting the proper nutrients for good health.

For example, when iron is low, it can result in loss of energy and dizziness and may affect your immune system. Iron is also an essential mineral that aids in the transportation of oxygen throughout the body, so it supports brain function and healthy cells and tissue like skin, hair and nails.

**Here are a few food choices you can be integrating into your family's diet for a boost of iron:**

**Get your greens.** Pump up meals by adding iron-rich, vegetables like broccoli, lentils, lima or kidney beans, raw spinach or other leafy greens.

**Snack on these.** Pack your lunches with snackable iron sources like pumpkin seeds, roasted almonds, sunflower seeds, dried apricots, seedless raisins and prunes.

**Get your vitamin C.** Vitamin C can play a role in regulating the absorption, transportation, and storage of plant-based forms of iron. So be sure to include vitamin C from fruits and vegetables like oranges, bell peppers, strawberries, and tomatoes.

## Safety



# Helping young hires learn the safety ropes

Young people are more at risk of harm from work for many reasons. They lack experience and maturity, awareness of risks, and skills and training; they may be unaware of their rights and employers' duties regarding health and safety; and they may be reluctant to speak out about problems simply to please their new employer. Therefore, they need to be given jobs that complement their skill set, along with adequate training and supervision.

With the necessary encouragement and support, and by developing their knowledge and confidence, young people are far more likely to play their part in managing the risks associated with their jobs. We should all do our part to help today's new hires become tomorrow's 'health and safety champions'.

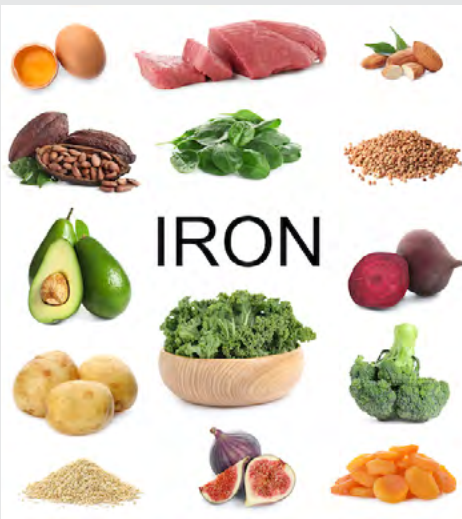
**Along with the proper training requirements there several elements that go a long way in supporting our young workers:**

**Communication** — Encourage young workers to speak up about what they observe on the job and make sure their

voices are heard and their opinions taken into account. Only if young workers feel that something is being done about the issues they raise will they be interested in continuing to be a part of the process.

**Empowerment** — It's important to give young workers the confidence to ask more experienced co-workers and managers about their safety practices without the fear that they will be punished or possibly lose their job. Remember young workers also have rights, and by encouraging questions they will also learn about their own responsibilities for their personal health and safety.

**Involvement** - Studies have shown that involving young people in solving real-life safety and health problems in their workplace is more meaningful to them and helps them to learn more effectively. Think of it as a two-way street. You can learn as well as teach.



# Ergonomics ensures health and well-being

Working every day behind a desk or standing in the same position for several hours at a time, can be a tiring and painful experience if you are not comfortable. Ergonomics, which is the study of how work is done and how to work better, helps us maintain a personal level of comfort.

Ergonomics focuses on the work environment and items such as the design and function of workstations, controls, displays, safety devices, tools, and lighting to fit your physical requirements, capabilities and limitations to ensure your health and well-being.

Ergonomic hazards refer to workplace conditions that pose the risk of injury to your musculoskeletal system. Examples of musculoskeletal injuries include carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition affecting the hand and wrist. Ergonomic hazards include repetitive movements, and awkward postures that come from improper work methods and improperly designed workstations, tools, and equipment.

It may only take a couple of adjustments to your chair, or your keyboard, or maybe the height of your workstation to achieve the comfort you need. Perhaps you just need to stand up and move around more often to make sure your back and shoulders don't start aching.

**While it is important to report issues about your workstation to your supervisor so he or she can help you, here are a few adjustments you can consider to improve your comfort level:**

- Maintain good posture when working at the keyboard. Utilize a chair with back support.
- Keep your feet supported on the floor or on a footrest when you work to reduce pressure on your lower back.
- Avoid twisting or bending your trunk or neck. Frequently used items should be positioned directly in front of you.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed with your elbows close to your sides.
- Position the monitor so that the viewed part of the screen allows you to keep your neck in a neutral or straight position. The monitor should be centred directly in front of you. The top of the computer screen should be slightly below the top of your head, so that you are looking at it with a slightly downward gaze.
- Position your monitor to eliminate excessive glare or reflections from windows and lighting.

Interspersing short movements and exercises throughout the workday can also boost your energy and efficiency. Whether it's stretching periodically or walking to a co-worker's station rather than sending an email or text, small actions can go a long way toward improving how you feel during the day and when you go home at night.

## Women's heart health: Simple habits to protect your ticker

Many Canadians do not consider their heart health until they are older. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, two out of three Canadian women have one or more major health factors that elevate their risk for heart disease, like diabetes or menopause. No matter your age, it is always a good time to start managing your heart health.

There are many small changes you can make to improve your heart health. Between regular physical activity and smart meal planning, here are a few ways to keep your heart health on track.

**Good fats vs. bad fats.** A great way to manage your heart health is to consider both the amount and type of fat you eat. Substitute bad saturated and trans fats in your diet with good fats like polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, which can help lower cholesterol levels. Polyunsaturated fats are naturally found in vegetable oils, soft margarines and nuts and seeds. Canada's Food Guide recommends including a small amount — 30 to 45 mL or two to three tablespoons — of unsaturated fat each day. This could include soft, non-hydrogenated margarine made from plant-based oils.

**Get up and get moving:** Living an active lifestyle is beneficial to heart health. The Heart and Stroke Foundation suggests getting 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week.

**Getting back into the kitchen:** A great way to ensure you have heart-healthy foods available to you each meal is to prepare them yourself. Some prepared foods can be high in calories, sodium, sugar or bad fats, but by preparing them at home, you can make simple substitutions to feel good about what you are eating. Cooking and baking with a soft, non-hydrogenated margarine is a great place to start. In fact, soft, non-hydrogenated margarine has 80 percent less saturated fat than butter and can be portioned the same as butter.



# How to prevent computer vision syndrome

Today's safety meeting is about ways to avoid computer vision syndrome.

An ever-increasing number of people have jobs that require staring at computer screens for hours at a time. The vision problems that can result have become known as computer vision syndrome (CVS).

CVS, also known as digital eye strain, is similar to carpal tunnel syndrome and other work-related repetitive motion injuries. It happens because the eyes follow the same path repeatedly, and it can get worse the longer you continue the movement.

The eyes have to focus and refocus all the time. They move back and forth as you read. You might have to look down at papers and then back up to type. The eyes react to changing images on the screen and your brain has to process what you're seeing. All these jobs require a lot of effort from eye muscles—and unlike a book or piece of paper, the screen adds contrast, flicker and glare.

While eye health professionals have yet to find CVS as a cause of any permanent eye damage, the pain and discomfort associated with the problem can affect workplace performance or the enjoyment of home activities. With a few preventative measures, however, the symptoms associated with CVS can be easily erased.

If you wear glasses for distance vision, reading or both, they might not provide the most efficient vision for viewing a computer screen, which is about 50 to 75 cm (20 to 30 inches) from your eyes.

Consider getting special lenses to help minimize neck and eye strain.



Many lens manufacturers now provide prescription lenses that reduce the amount of focusing effort the eyes must exert. These lenses are optimized for a computer screen distance and tend to maximize the field of view, which is important as many people now have wider or even multiple monitors.

Reduce glare and harsh reflections on the computer screen by modifying the lighting in the room, closing window shades, changing the contrast or brightness of the screen, or attaching a filter or hood to the monitor. This will not only help eyes focus better but may also eliminate the need to squint while looking at the screen. The visor test can help determine if the current lighting in the room is a problem. The test is conducted by cupping hands over the eyes like a baseball cap to block the

lights while looking at the monitor. If an improvement is immediately noticed, then lighting changes should be made.

### Here are some more tips to reduce the risk of CVS:

- \*Position your screen about an arm's length from your eyes and 20 degrees below eye level.
- \*Set colour and contrast tones to suit your eyes and match the brightness of your screen with your surroundings.
- \* Consider positioning your screen so that it sits perpendicular to windows and other bright light sources.
- \* Keep your screen free of fingerprints and dust, as both can reduce visual clarity.
- \* If you alternate between looking at your screen and paperwork, consider obtaining a clipboard that attaches alongside your monitor so the two are at the same working distance.
- \* Follow the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes take a 20-second break and focus on something at least 20 feet (6 metres) away to give your eyes a much-needed break.
- \* Remember to blink. On average, a person blinks 12 times per minute, but when on the computer, only about 5 times per minute. That can add up to dry eyes. Relieve the discomfort by using artificial tears (eye drops) or gels.

Thanks for your attention today.

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- ① CVS is also known as digital eye strain.

True      False
- ② Keeping your screen free of fingerprints and dust does not help with visual clarity.

True      False
- ③ Reduce glare and harsh reflections on the computer screen by:

  - A) Modifying the lighting in the room.
  - B) Closing window shades.
  - C) All of the above.
- ④ CVS is similar to carpal tunnel syndrome and other work-related repetitive motion injuries.

True      False
- ⑤ The pain and discomfort associated with CVS can affect workplace performance or the enjoyment of home activities.

True      False
- ⑥ CSV stands for:

  - A) Carrier Vision Scenario
  - B) Computer Vision Syndrome
  - C) Computer Viable Syndrome

ANSWERS: 1. True 2. False 3. C 4. True 5. True 6. B

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Have meeting attendees sign this sheet:


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