

The "C-Change" Initiative:

1. Change behaviors.
2. Challenge ourselves to re-think how we work.
3. Certify the results on a daily basis.



Toolbox Talk

Week of February 8th 2010

Home Safety

Safety in the home is more important now than ever. Preventable injuries and deaths are on the rise in homes and communities across the United States. To really make an impact, people need to be aware of the hazards around them and change their behaviors. Share what you learn here about safety in your home with your family, friends and neighbors. Simple steps could make a huge difference.

Radon

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, and chemically inert radioactive gas. The Surgeon General estimates that 21,000 lives are lost each year to radon-induced lung cancer. Radon can be found in all 50 states. Unless you test for it, there is no way of telling how much is present.

Lead Poisoning

Today there are still about 38 million homes that contain some lead paint—about 40% of all US housing. Leaded gasoline emissions that were deposited over the years in the soil near highways and busy roads continue to contaminate many yards. And thousands of old lead pipes that continue to serve as water service lines in many older US cities also continue to leach lead into drinking water. Also, many imported items such as toys have leaded paint. The good news is that lead poisoning is preventable. Families need to be informed about the various sources of lead and need to be vigilant in preventing exposure.

Sun Safety

With one in five Americans developing skin cancer, childhood education about sun safety is a vital step toward reducing risk and improving public health. Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays seriously threatens human health. Besides the immediate effect of sunburn, over time excess UV radiation can cause skin cancer, eye damage, immune system suppression, and premature aging. About 23 percent of lifetime sun exposure occurs before the age of 18. Learning about sun safety and dangers of sunbeds is the key to reducing the risk of future health problems.

Radiation

Radiation is all around us, every minute of every day. Some radiation is essential to life, such as heat and light from the sun. We could not exist without it. Some radiation informs and entertains us, through video signals and sounds from television sets and radios. As used in medicine, radiation helps us diagnose and treat diseases and save lives. Yet it can also pose serious risks.

Poison Prevention

The Overdose Epidemic

Poisoning – particularly from overdoses of over-the-counter, prescription and illicit drugs – has surpassed falls to become the nation's second-leading cause of unintentional death, after motor vehicle collisions. With an 80 percent increase from 2001 to 2006, poisoning is the fastest-rising cause of accidental death in the United States.

Unintentional Poisoning From Overdoses

While most people think of poisoning as a childhood issue, adults are overwhelmingly the source of the steep recent increase in unintentional poisoning deaths.

Between 1993 and 2003, there was a 107 percent increase in the unintentional poisoning death rate from overdoses among Americans ages 20 to 64. In Washington state and the District of Columbia, overdoses have surpassed motor vehicle crashes to become the leading cause of unintentional death.

Drug-related poisonings are often due to overdose or misuse of opioid analgesics, such as oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, fentanyl and buprenorphine initially prescribed to treat chronic pain. While the greatest number of these deaths is occurring among white men ages 45 to 54 – up nearly 6,000 in a decade – poisoning death rates are increasing fastest among white women – up more than 300 percent.

Call To Educate

A survey conducted in fall 2007 by the National Safety Council revealed that most Americans (81 percent) still believe that children are at greatest risk for poisoning. Less than 4 percent said adults, though data shows that less than one percent of fatal poisoning deaths in 2004 affected children (ages 0-5) and more than 96 percent involved adults (19 years and older).

The need for public education is clear. When asked to rank potential causes of poisoning in the council's fall 2007 survey, 53 percent of people surveyed said household chemicals were most commonly associated with fatal poisoning while just 34 percent named drugs and medicine.

Poisoning And Children

While children rarely die today from unintentional poisoning, non-fatal poisonings remain a childhood concern. About 50,000 children under the age of 4 are injured by unintentional poisonings every year.

This is testament to the success of national awareness efforts, such as poison prevention campaigns and child-resistant packaging.