



RESOURCE

Connections

OUCH! MY ACHING BACK

By Karen Walsh
Certified Ergonomic Assessment Specialist

"Dental staff don't lift much, do they?" I innocently asked at a recent dental hygienists meeting. How often must dental staff help a non-mobile, perhaps an elderly or overweight patient, into or out of the dental chair? Many people lift poorly, without thinking, putting unnecessary strain on their backs. It is vital to think ahead about your lift. Consider the distance and the weight of the person or object. Here are a few tips to keep you safe while helping your patients:

- **Get help:** If you strain your back, how long you will be off work while your team struggles without you? How will that injury affect you, your family, your employer?
- **Use a sliding board:** Lower the dental chair and position the wheelchair beside it about 2/3rds of the way down. Ideally, the patient will be moving downhill. Lock the wheelchair; remove one side armrest and the leg rests. Ask your patient to weight shift onto one buttock cheek while you firmly place the board under the other. While sliding along the board to the other side, keep the patient's hand on top of the board to lessen risk of trapped fingers. Stand directly in front of the patient for safety and encouragement. If the patient has very limited ROM (Range of Motion), you can have them tilt forward with feet on the floor and scoot their hips along the board.
- **Elderly and frail patients:** Please don't grip elderly people under the arms, they bruise and dislocate easily. Use a gait belt to give you leverage and be sure it's snug but not overly tight.
- **Stroke Patients:** This patient IS the hardest to move. GET HELP! Move towards the strongest side. Support the person's weak knee between your legs if he or she is non-ambulatory. Beware of "pushers" - those who unwittingly push away from the surface with their strong sides or those backward leaners.

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Safety: A Universal Focus

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June marked the celebration of the National Safety Council's (NSC) National Safety Month. Chartered in 1913, the NSC is a not-for-profit organization that promotes safety of Americans at home, on the roads, and at work. The NSC dedicates each week in June to a different aspect of safety, particularly reminding us to review workplace, driving, emergency preparedness and home and community this year.

Being safe in today's world has taken on a new meaning, as home security systems, monitored parking garages, and personal cell phones are the norm. This raises the questions: What does personal safety mean to you? What measures can you take to improve your personal safety?

When applied to healthcare, the word "safe" also has an important meaning—free from risk or injury. Newspapers, TV and magazines

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LOOSE LIPS

Tidbits of wisdom that may or may not be loosely related to dentistry

Summer Safety when it's Hot Hot Hot!

Many people don't realize that heat-related illnesses are common in hot summer weather, and they can be potentially fatal, especially for the elderly or athletes who don't take proper precautions. The four most common heat-related emergencies are: **cramps, fainting, exhaustion, and heat strokes.** These occur when the body can no longer cool itself properly.

Sweating helps keep the body cool. When sweat cannot evaporate because of high humidity (like here in NE Florida), the body can no longer dissipate heat and body temperature may rise. When body temperature increases too much and without relief, people can experience dizziness, nausea, headache, cramps, or muscle weakness.

Loose Lips Says:

- **Don't** wait until you are thirsty to begin drinking fluids.
- **Drink** water continuously throughout the day, but especially before and during outdoor activities like exercising in the summertime.

If symptoms of overheating appear:

- **Get** to a cool place immediately.
- **Get** some water and get help.

Just Published - The CPI '06 Final Report

(Yes, it took our US Bureau of Labor Statistics that long to give us the final for 2006.)

Overall consumer price index increase 2.5%

Dental CPI increase 5%

BIG Question?? – Did you raise your fees 5% this year. If not, it is time for a mid year correction to keep up with inflation from suppliers.

1st Annual Dental Hygiene Appreciation Award

Recognize that special hygienist in your office. Is your hygienist someone who goes above and beyond? Does he/she possess unique attributes that shine in his/her patient care? What makes your hygienist special—team spirit, length of time with the practice?

In honor of National Dental Hygiene Month this October, Kim Knapp, Dental Temps of Northeast Florida and Linda Harvey, Horizon Consulting Group invite you to submit your entry. One winner will be chosen from each of the following counties, Duval, St. John's, Clay and Nassau. Each winner will receive \$50 and a commemorative certificate.

Deadline for submissions is September 28, 2007. Winners will be announced at the October 11th Northeast Florida Dental Hygiene Association meeting. Call Kim Knapp (220-4459) or Linda Harvey (573-2232) for an entry form.

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are full of heartbreaking stories about unfortunate patient incidents. As a result of patient-related mishaps and medical errors, safety in healthcare has become a national priority. The same questions we ask about our own safety can be asked about the safety of the patients we care for. What does patient safety mean to me? What can I do to improve patient safety in my practice?

One organization dedicated to patient safety is the American Society of Healthcare Risk Management (ASHRM). In addition to promoting effective and innovative risk management strategies, ASHRM also focuses on developing and implementing safe and effective patient care strategies. Each year, ASHRM celebrates Healthcare Risk Management Week in June. This year's theme was "Make Your Mark."

How can you make your mark? There are numerous opportunities and resources available to strengthen safety in our personal lives as well as in the lives of our patients. First, pause to become more aware of safety; next identify strategies for improving safety; and, finally, make a commitment to continually improve safety at home and at work. Safety is a universal issue.

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Keep your mind on your personal safety.

1. Plan your lift
2. Explain your action and ask the patient to help. Count out loud. Move on a count of 3.
3. Use your legs, never your back.

It is not selfish to be thoughtful of your own safety.

(For the full article:
www.ergonomictherapist.com)

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