

YOURHEALTH

Duradiamond Newsletter May 2020



Duradiamond
Building Healthy Business



- HOT WEATHER WORKING
- SUN AWARENESS
- HOW'S YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

It's getting hot out here...

An individual's **thermal comfort** is the result of both environmental and personal factors:

- Environmental factors include (i) air temperature (ii) radiant temperature - the heat that radiates from a warm object (iii) air velocity - the speed of air moving across the individual (iv) humidity - the amount of water vapour in the air.
- Personal factors include (i) clothing - too much causes heat stress, too little risks cold injury (ii) work rate/metabolic heat - the more work we do, the more heat we produce.

How do I stop getting too warm in hot weather?

- **You can control the environment**, e.g. use ventilation/air conditioning, direct the ventilation so it doesn't move directly onto you or others and/or use humidifiers or dehumidifiers as required. If working outside, try to shield yourself if there are canopies, etc. Such actions can really make a difference to your productivity.
- **Try to restrict the length of time you work outdoors**: work may be rescheduled for the cooler parts of the day or you may have flexible hours to avoid the worst effects. Your manager may also introduce mechanical aids, e.g. lifting aids or power tools, to assist with physically demanding jobs in such environments.
- **Take a look at what you are wearing** (i) PPE - make sure that no more than is appropriate is being worn (ii) uniforms - your manager may consider the designs and materials, etc to improve thermal comfort (iii) dress code - you may be able to adapt your clothing where allowed. And consider layers of clothing that you can take on and off as you need to in response to temperature changes.
- **Changing your behaviours**: your manager may allow you to make minor adjustments to your clothing or rate of work. Make use of cooldown areas and fans or try to open windows or adjust thermostats. Drink plenty of water.
- Your manager will **monitor you** by providing appropriate supervision and training for hot weather working and they should make sure employees remain well hydrated. For those who are pregnant, have an illness/disability, or are on medication, they should seek advice from the OH department.



Sun awareness and your skin

Too much sunlight is harmful to your skin. Overexposure can cause sunburn, sunstroke/heat stroke, premature skin aging and an increased risk of skin cancer. Even in the UK, ultraviolet rays can damage the skin, although they are much more powerful nearer the equator.

Minimising the risks & maximising the benefits of sunlight exposure

- Unless someone has a very dark skin type, they should protect their skin when out in strong sunlight for more than a short period of time, both in the UK and abroad.
- The UV index provides an indicator of the sun's strength for a given location, date and time. This information, combined with skin type and behaviour, can be used to assess someone's risk of sunburn. The Met Office provides daily information on UV levels in the UK.
- When possible, only a limited amount of time should be spent in strong sunlight. Keep out of the sun for at least the two hours around midday.

Minimising the risks & maximising the benefits of sunlight exposure

- In exposing your skin to strong sunlight to increase your vitamin D, you should be aware that prolonged exposure, i.e. leading to burning or tanning is unlikely to provide additional benefit. Exposing commonly uncovered areas of skin such as forearms and hands for short periods when in strong sunlight provides vitamin D (longer periods of exposure may be needed for those with darker skin).
- Protection from the sun can be achieved by covering up with suitable clothing, seeking shade and applying sunscreen. Suitable clothing includes: a broad-brimmed hat that shades the face, neck and ears, a long-sleeved top, and trousers or long skirts in close-weave fabrics that do not allow sunlight through. It also includes sunglasses with wraparound lenses or wide arms (to provide side protection) that have the CE Mark - currently EN 1836:2005.
- Skin not usually exposed to sunlight is more likely to burn, so extra care is needed.
- Keep well hydrated with non-alcoholic drinks.

Using your sun cream to best effect

- The sun protection factor (SPF) categorises protection against ultraviolet B wavelength sunlight (UVB). The higher the factor the greater the protection provided against UVB.
- A sunscreen with a SPF of 10 theoretically means that a person using this may remain in sunlight ten times longer without burning. The more stars there are the better the level of protection against the aging rays of the sun (ultraviolet A). The maximum protection available is five stars.
- Wear a sunscreen that protects you against both UVA and UVB. If you are photosensitive, use SPF 30 or higher combined with a four or five-star rating.
- Sunscreens should be worn by all when the weather is bright and sunny, but photosensitive individuals may need to wear them throughout the year.
- Apply your sunscreen thickly and evenly. Aim to re-apply your sunscreen every two to three hours, especially if you have been swimming (water resistant emulsions are available).

Mental health awareness



Approximately one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. In England, one in six people report experiencing a common mental health problem (such as anxiety and depression) in any given week. Worries about things such as money, jobs and benefits can make it harder for people to cope.

There are signs that could prompt you to think that a friend, colleague or family member is dealing with a mental health issue, and that there might be good reason to seek more information, advice or help about your concerns. Take a look:

www.healthdirect.gov.au/nine-signs-of-mental-illness-infographic

As manager, or as a colleague, or simply as a friend, being aware of each other, and of how mental health problems can present, may allow us to identify the problem earlier, seek help sooner, and minimise the longer-term adverse effects. Let's all be more mindful both at work and at home.

And, it's Mental Health Awareness Week from 18-24 May 2020.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week