



CONNECTIONS

November 2008



Safety

Back pain is one of the most common medical problems in the United States. It affects us on the job and at home. Each of us should understand the back and take measures to protect it.

Anatomy - The back has three main parts: the spine, spinal cord, and back muscles. The spine is comprised of bones called vertebrae and the muscles are attached to the spine. The vertebrae are joined together by facet joints. Softer disks function as cushions and shock absorbers between the vertebrae and allow the spine to bend and flex. The vertebrae protect the spinal cord which consists of the nerves connecting the body to the brain. The nerves carry instructions from the brain to organs, muscles, and limbs. They also carry pain sensations back to the brain. The spine is joined to the hips by sacroiliac joints.

Causes of Back Pain - Problems with the back muscles, disks, and joints are the most usual causes of back pain. Some of the most common causes of these problems include: incorrect lifting techniques, improper posture, too little exercise, too much weight, smoking, and aging.

Prevention - Back pain can be prevented by: practicing safe bending and lifting techniques, strengthening and stretching exercises for the muscles that support the back, good posture, weight control, and smoking cessation.

Use correct lifting techniques:

Bend your knees and keep your head up. Lift the load straight up in one motion: do not twist. Hold the load close to your body. Bend your knees when lowering the load.

Strengthening Exercises:

Strengthening the muscles that support the back - muscles of the back, abdomens, and buttocks - with exercise is an important measure to take to prevent back strain. Strong and flexible muscles are also beneficial for back pain caused by conditions other than muscle strain, e.g. herniated disc, sciatica, and back osteoarthritis. Strong muscles absorb shock before it reaches the joints. Increasing muscle strength takes time. Increase exercises slowly to avoid injury.

Stretching Exercises: Stretching the back muscles is also important as shortened muscles can cause misalignment of the spine (poor posture). Stretching exercises loosen and lengthen the muscles to reduce pressure on the discs.

Body Weight: Lower back pain is more common in overweight people. Carrying extra weight causes more stress on the back, especially the lower back which supports most the weight of the torso. If excess weight is concentrated in the stomach area, even more stress is placed on the lower back. Weight can be controlled with a healthy

diet and exercise. Though aerobic exercise is the most effective way to burn calories, strength exercises increase your muscle mass, which in turn increases your resting metabolism. Extra muscles burn extra calories even while sleeping.

Diet: Eat a nutritious diet.

Getting plenty of calcium, phosphorous and vitamin D may help prevent osteoporosis, which can lead to compression fractures and low back pain. Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water to help flush away acidic waste products from the muscles. High levels of these byproducts of muscular activity can cause muscle irritation and pain.

Posture: It is extremely important to learn and maintain good posture. If the spine is out of alignment, the muscles have to work harder to support the head, causing strained muscles and back pain. Straight posture, when sitting or standing, keeps your body in balance and helps to avoid that stress. Be sure to check and correct your posture during your everyday activities.

Smoking: If you are a smoker, these facts may help encourage you to quit. Smoking increases your risk of bone loss and increases your sensitivity to pain. Nicotine, in any form, blocks the transport of oxygen and other important nutrients to spinal discs. Starved of oxygen, the disks are much less able to repair themselves and tend to collapse at a much earlier age than in non-smokers. This collapse - degenerative disk disease - can lead to chronic and debilitating back pain.

Conclusion: Four out of five adults experience back pain at some point. Using these basic techniques can help you avoid major problems. We

encourage you to think it over and correct your bad habits.

Stats

We had one recordable injury in October; a hurt back. Let's try to protect our backs at work and at home. Our recordable rate for the year is 3.49. Keep up the safe work!

STAR Performer-Nov.



This month's STAR performer is long over due for recognition. Steve Stamm has been an integral part of our engineering department for several years now. Anyone who has had the pleasure of working with Steve knows how talented he is.

I continue to be amazed at the depth of his knowledge and how rooted he is in practical, real world design. There is one thing you can always count on with Steve. He won't hesitate to tell it to you like it is...or to say something disparaging about an architect...Steve is doing an amazing job leading the design efforts for a number of key projects here at UMC.

Steve isn't the typical engineering "geek" with a pocket protector and taped up glasses, though. He has other interests including traveling,

vintage cars, and his favorite of all corvettes.

Congratulations Steve! You truly are a STAR Performer. I look forward to working with you for many more years.

Written & Submitted by:
David Malone

Birthdays

November

- 3 Gary Morgan
- 4 Jim Carlson
- 6 Rosalie Baxter
- 6 Todd Smith
- 7 Andrea Szalda
- 9 Steve Brooks
- 11 Sonja Cotterell
- 11 Rene Mendez
- 12 Randy Adams
- 13 Randy Bailey
- 15 Rick Davison
- 15 Greg Ferguson
- 22 Brigid Beavin
- 29 Bill Laughlin
- 29 Josh Bonciolini

December

- 4 Steve Stamm
- 5 Paul Idzik
- 8 Rick Coulter
- 9 Audie Wallace
- 11 Jerry Bush



On The Move...



Rick Hawkins - Industrial General Superintendent

Bryan Eppler - Major Projects Manager - now manager of Estimating, Purchasing and Detailing

Calendar of Events



December

12th-Santa Party (UMC)
18th & 19th - Holiday Turkey Deliveries

January, 2009

10th-Holiday Party (**VENUE CHANGE** - Embassy Suites, Bellevue)



Anniversaries

Rick Hawkins - 20 years
Brett Endres - 15 years

Turkey Days

Mark your calendar - December 18 and 19 will be the delivery of the holiday turkeys to all employees!!!

Holiday Party Update

The UMC Holiday Party location has changed to the **EMBASSY SUITES, BELLEVUE** due to a major renovation at the Red Lion Hotel. They were unable to have the project completed prior to our event date.

UMCCF News

Mukilteo Food Bank

These times are trying for all of us, however, there are people very desperate to feed their family and we can help ease the stress for them.

We are collecting non-perishable and canned foods to donate to the local Mukilteo Food Bank. You can deposit your donations in the barrel located in the kitchen and they will be brought to the food bank throughout the holiday season.

The Fife office and job sites can also participate by simply bringing the canned foods or non-perishables to the job trailer/office and Les will bring them to Mukilteo to include in our company's donation to the food bank. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!!

Children's Hospital Toy Donation Drive



Again this year, UMC will be collecting toy donations to be given to the kids at Children's Hospital.

We will have the toy collection bin in the reception area beginning on **Monday, Nov. 17** and going **through Wednesday, Dec. 17**.

The Fife office and all the jobsites can participate in this toy drive by having a collection bin in one location and the contents will be transported back to Mukilteo via our internal courier service - please see Les Bouck for the pick-up schedule.

"Restrictions" (copied from the Children's Hospital website) are for safety and infection control reasons, so please donate only new items that are washable, nontoxic, and not easily broken. They are unable to accept used toys or toys that represent violence. Please do not send large metal trucks or toys. Please do not wrap donations.

Greatest Needs of the Toy Program Wish List

- Gift Certificates
- Disposable cameras
- Scrapbook supplies
- Prepaid phone cards
- Card games
- Magic tricks
- Disney or other character toys
- Small Lego sets
- Nail polish
- Trading cards
- Coloring books
- Arts and crafts kits

Other Priority Needs

- Spanish, Vietnamese, and Russian videos, books, and music for all ages
- Cassette tapes (lullabies, easy listening, all ages)
- SNAP models for older school age to teenage
- Tickets to local entertainment events
- Fisher Price Tuff-Stuff tape players

Infants and Toddlers

- Mirrors
- Teething toys
- Washable rattles
- Plastic chain links
- Board books
- Sorting/stacking toys
- Washable squeeze toys
- Beginning cars and trucks
- Light, sound, and pop-up toys
- Busy boxes

* Please, no gyms

Pre-School / School Age

- Brio train cars only (no track)
- Smaller sturdy plastic cars and trucks
- Small inside balls and/or Koosh balls
- Small magic wands
- Animals and/or dinosaurs
- Nerf games
- Small Legos
- Tech-niks
- K-nexs
- Black velvet pictures to color

Teens

- Discman and CDs
- PG and PG-13 videos
- X-Box, Game Cube and Play Station 2 games
- Journal supplies
- Quality headphones
- Pre-paid phone cards
- Electronic hand-held games
- Pro sports team caps and t-shirts
- Bath soaps, gels, and lotion gift sets
- Fingernail polish and manicure supplies
- Gift certificates (music stores, restaurants, specialty stores, etc.)

Arts & Crafts

- Watercolor painting kits
- Oil pastels
- Beeswax sheets for candle making (all colors)
- Black velvet pictures to color
- Glitter pens/glitter glue
- Fabric markers
- Scene/story stickers
- Doodle art posters
- Fimo/Sculpy clay
- Beading supplies
- Coloring books
- Sketch books
- Puffy paints
- Play Doh

Self-Contained Craft Kits

Call (206) 987-4133 for information. Some kit ideas include beadie babies, friendship or bead bracelets, hemp jewelry, paper projects, sand art, and stamping.

Games

- Playing cards
- UNO
- Clue
- Jenga
- Taboo
- Trouble
- Mancala
- Battleship
- Guess Who
- Catch Phrase
- Connect Four

Crayola

- Crayons
- Markers
- Other Crayola brand art materials

Charitable Contributions

It's time again to start thinking about supporting charities near and dear to our heart. The 2009 payroll deduction forms will be distributed soon and we ask that you consider weekly deductions to help those truly in need. You can select a charity from the UMCCF website list or you can name your own organization - either way, any donation will be greatly appreciated!

