

Safety Newsletter

Merced County Schools
Insurance Group

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

Winter 2021

Be Prepared: First Aid Kits

It is always a good idea to have a first aid kit on hand. First aid kits can be purchased at your local drug store or you can customize your own by building your own kit. There are different types of kits for different exposure hazards and emergencies. What should go in your first aid kit depends on what you need it for and where you plan to store it. Some places where you should have a first aid kit on hand: in your car, at home in a general area, a specific kit for the kitchen, a customized kit for the baby in the nursery, a travel size kit to keep at your desk or work area, etc. A first aid kit will come in handy, but it is only useful if you actually have one that you can use during a time of need. Be prepared and get your first aid kits ready. You can build your own first aid kit:



- Absorbent compress dressings
- Adhesive bandages
- Adhesive cloth tape
- Antibiotic ointment
- Antiseptic wipe packets
- Disposable gloves
- Gauze roll and Gauze pads
- Tweezers and Emergency blanket
- Thermometer
- Instant cold compress
- Personal prescription medications
- Emergency phone numbers

If you already have an existing first aid kit, check for expiration dates and replace any used or out-of-date contents. Plan ahead and be prepared!



Covid-19 Vaccine

Help stop the pandemic by getting vaccinated.

- Current authorized COVID-19 vaccines that were developed in the United States do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. So, if you get vaccinated it cannot make you sick with COVID-19. Although there are several types of vaccines currently being offered, all of them teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus. This process can cause symptoms, such as fever. This is totally normal and a positive sign that the body is building protection against the virus.
- If you already had COVID-19 and recovered from it the CDC still recommends you get vaccinated. Currently it is unknown how long you are immune

to the virus after recovering from COVID-19. Although it is rare, it is still possible that you can become infected with COVID-19. Health experts recommend you should be vaccinated even if you've already had COVID-19.

- The COVID-19 vaccine is safe for pregnant women. Currently there is no evidence that the antibodies formed from the vaccine will cause any problem with pregnancy.
- After you have completed all doses of your COVID-19 vaccination you should still continue to wear a face cover and physically distance yourself from others staying at least 6 feet away. Avoid crowds, avoid poorly ventilated areas, and wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds.

Your school district may already be coordinating and setting up appointments for school employees. You can also sign up at www.MyTurn.Ca.gov to schedule an appointment for a vaccination if you are eligible. For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine: <https://covid19.ca.gov/>

Spring Cleaning- Medicine Cabinet Edition



Many may spend their time reorganizing the bedroom closet and the kitchen pantry as part of the spring cleaning routine. While you are at it, make sure to include medicine cabinets on your spring cleaning list too. Expired medication should be disposed of and not used, but how do you dispose of these medications? Did you know that flushing medications down the toilet, disposing it down the drain, or in the garbage is harmful to the environment? Your unused or expired medications should be turned in to proper disposal locations. Each county has their own designated disposal location. Prior to dropping meds off for disposal, remove personal information from the containers.

Merced County:

<https://www.co.merced.ca.us/3338/Safe-Drug-Disposal#:~:text=You%20can%20dispose%20of%20your,%2Dstation%20in%20Delhi%2C%20CA.>

Stanislaus County -

<https://stancountyrxsafety.org/en/medication-disposal>

Back Pain at Work: Preventing Pain and Injury

Heavy lifting, repetitive movements and sitting at a desk all day can take a toll on your back. Get the facts about back pain at work and how to prevent it. Whether it's dull and achy or sharp and stabbing, back pain can make it hard to concentrate on your

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job. Even routine office work can cause or worsen back pain.

Common causes of back pain at work

- Exerting too much force on your back. Lifting or moving heavy objects can cause injury.
- Repeating certain movements, especially those that involve twisting or rotating your spine, can injure your back.
- An inactive job or a desk job can contribute to back pain, especially if you have poor posture or sit all day in a chair with inadequate back support.

Back pain and lifestyle factors

Factors such as aging, obesity and poor physical condition can contribute to back pain. Try to focus on maintaining a healthy weight, to minimize stress.

- Start by eating a healthy diet. Make sure you get enough calcium and vitamin D. These nutrients can help prevent osteoporosis, a condition that causes your bones to become weak and brittle and is responsible for many of the bone fractures that lead to back pain.
- Combine aerobic exercise, such as swimming or walking, with exercises that strengthen and stretch your back muscles and abdomen. Exercises that increase your balance and strength can also decrease your risk of falling and injuring your back. Consider tai chi, yoga and weight-bearing exercises to improve balance.

For most healthy adults, the Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity and strength training exercises at least twice a week. Also, if you smoke, quit. Smoking reduces blood flow to your lower spine, which can contribute to spinal disc degeneration and slow healing from injuries.

Preventing back pain at work

- **Pay attention to posture.** While standing, balance your weight evenly on your feet. Don't slouch. Adjust the height of the chair so that your feet rest flat on the floor or on a footrest and your thighs are parallel to the floor. Remove cellphone from your back pocket to prevent putting extra pressure on your buttocks/lower back.
- **Lift properly.** While lifting and carrying a heavy object, lift with your legs and tighten your core muscles. Hold the object close to your body. Maintain the natural curve of your back. Don't twist when lifting. If an object is too heavy to lift safely, ask someone to help you.



- **Modify repetitive tasks.** Use lifting devices, when available, to help you lift loads. If you work at a computer, make sure that your monitor, keyboard, mouse and chair are positioned properly. If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a headset. Avoid unnecessary bending, twisting and reaching. Limit the time you spend carrying heavy briefcases and bags.
- **Listen to your body.** Change position often. Periodically walk around and gently stretch muscles to relieve tension.

Look at the work environment to address situations that might aggravate your back. Even simple steps will help to ease back pain.

11 Rules for Handling of Hazardous Materials



Here are 11 basic rules all employees who handle hazardous materials should follow.

Rule #1. Follow all established procedures and perform job duties as you've been trained.

Rule #2. Be cautious and plan ahead. Think about what could go wrong and pay close attention to what you're doing while you work.

Rule #3. Always use required PPE—and inspect it carefully before each use to make sure it's safe to use. Replace worn out or damaged PPE.

Rule #4. Make sure all containers are properly labeled and that the material is contained in an appropriate container. Don't use any material not contained or labeled properly. Report damaged/illegible labels to your supervisor

Rule #5. Read labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) before using any material.

Rule #6. Use all materials only as they're intended. Don't, for example, use solvents to clean your hands, or gasoline to wipe down equipment.

Rule #7. Never eat or drink while handling any materials, and if your hands are contaminated, don't use cosmetics or handle contact lenses.

Rule #8. Read the labels and refer to MSDSs to identify properties and hazards of chemical products and materials.

Rule #9. Store all materials properly, separate incompatibles, store in ventilated, dry, cool areas.

Rule #10. Keep you and your work area clean. After handling any material, wash thoroughly with soap and water.

Rule #11. Know emergency procedures and equipment. Understanding emergency procedures means knowing evacuation procedures, emergency reporting procedures, and procedures for dealing with fires and spills. It also means knowing what to do in a medical emergency if a co-worker is injured or overcome by chemicals.