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## Health and Safety Committee

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A newsletter for and about safety at UW Oshkosh

### Building a Culture by Evan Schwalbe

Last fall I was asked to take on the position of Campus Safety Officer by the administration and have accepted the challenge. I have spent some time exploring existing safety programs and the general attitudes toward safety in our campus community.

The results were kind of mixed. The overall feeling of the administration and employees is that they all want to have a safe workplace for everyone. While we do have some safety programs in place and working, others need improving or implementation.

That's where I come in.

In the coming months, I'll be working on getting people involved with the development and implementation of safety programs and building a new safety culture on campus.

Creating a safety culture takes time as do the programs. It is frequently a multi-year process and requires employer and employee commitment. A commitment I believe we have.

In a strong safety culture, everyone feels responsible for safety and pursues it on a daily basis; employees go beyond "the call of duty" to identify unsafe conditions and behaviors, and intervene to correct them.

I sincerely hope that I can count on each of you, to make sure everyone has the opportunity to go home healthy at the end of each and every day.



### Four Steps to Prevent the Cold and Flu By: Stephanie Krueger

With the winter months and close indoor contact comes the height of the cold and flu season. Last year, influenza peaked in early February<sup>1</sup>. Flu and colds are both respiratory illnesses but are often hard to tell apart. Symptoms of the flu include fever, aches, fatigue and sore throat, and unlike the common cold often comes on suddenly and is more severe. Below are a few steps you can take to not let the cold and flu get you this semester.

#### 1. Cover Your Cough

Colds are caused by rhinoviruses that are spread through invisible droplets in the air or on things we touch, along with close person to person contact.

These droplets can travel up to 12 feet when a person sneezes or coughs. Flu is spread the same way by invisible droplets. Colds are most contagious during the first 2 to 4 days after symptoms appear, while the flu can be spread the day before one comes down with symptoms up until a week after becoming sick. So cover your cough! Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Be sure to cover your mouth and nose. And if you don't have a tissue, sneeze into your jacket or elbow, not your hands!<sup>2,3,4</sup>



## 2. Wash Your Hands

It seems like common sense, but I've still witnessed people walking out of the bathroom without washing their hands. During cold and flu season, we should be extra vigilant, washing our hands often, especially after we sneeze, cough, and go to the restroom. The CDC recommends that we wash our hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.<sup>4</sup> Make sure to get your nails and the backs of your hands as these are often missed spots. Be aware of the surfaces you touch while you are washing your hands and after you finish such as sink and door handles. Use your sleeves to turn off the sink and open the door if possible. If you can't wash your hands often you can use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.

## 3. Avoid Touching Your Face

Try to avoid touching your face or at least become aware of how often you do. We touch our face about 16 times an hour on average. That's almost 400 opportunities a day for cold and flu causing germs to infiltrate the protective lining of our nose and throat.<sup>2,5</sup> I am by no means perfect either. One of my nervous habits is biting my fingernails. Since we can't constantly wash our hands, we need to become aware of our disgusting habits and the surfaces we touch (such as cell phones and computer keyboards).

## 4. If You Are Sick, Stay Home

This piece of advice may not be realistic for most of us, but if you are truly ill, the best way to protect you and others is to stay home. Make arrangements with your profs if you need to stay home, most are understanding.

These tips are not meant for you to live in a bubble, just to make you more aware. If you have any other health concerns contact the **Student Health Center at 920-424-2424, and if you haven't already, get your flu vaccine. Getting vaccinated is the number one way to prevent the flu!**

Sources:

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season.htm>
2. <http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/common/cold.html>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>
4. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm>
5. [http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/painter/2009-09-27-your-health\\_N.htm?csp=34](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/painter/2009-09-27-your-health_N.htm?csp=34)



Most accidents occur around or under the house.

Want to be involved with the publishing of the Health and Safety newsletter? Call Evan at 4484

# ICE AND SNOW TAKE IT SLOW

DON'T TAKE SHORTCUTS

TAKE YOUR TIME

WIPE FEET WHEN ENTERING BUILDINGS

WEAR PROPER FOOTWEAR

REPORT UNSAFE CONDITIONS TO  
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

CALL 920-424-3466

If you look around you'll see the above poster on entrances of buildings as well as on Campus Vision during snow events.

AND REMEMBER:

- Slow down and pay attention.
- Make sure your feet are as dry as you can get them before walking on tiled floors
- Avoid heels and smooth bottomed shoes

And if you see unsafe snow or ice covered areas.... Call 3466

## Office Eating Habits Can Lead to Absenteeism

A national study disclosed that less than half of American office workers clean up before eating at their desks or in break areas. This lack of rudimentary hygiene, especially during cold and flu season, can lead to increased worker illness and absenteeism.

The study found that 46 percent of respondents do not clean their desks or work surfaces prior to eating from them, while 54 percent said that they didn't always wash their hands in an effective manner prior to eating.

Employers can help by providing adequate personal cleaning supplies, posting signs and notices reminding employees to wash their hands, and always making sure that proper hand cleaning supplies are available. We have the means and know-how to provide a safe place for everyone to take breaks.

**Make sure you use it!**



**It's Not  
Fun Being  
a Sick  
Puppy**