

## ARE YOU AWARE OF THE CHANGES REGARDING NOISE AND THE CONTROL OF NOISE AT WORK REGULATIONS 2005?

This tightens the legal requirements in relation to noise by reducing the exposure action values to 80 decibals (A) (dB) and 85 dB (A).

Over one million employees in Great Britain are exposed to levels of noise that put their hearing at risk. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that:

- Employers have a legal duty to protect the hearing of their employees
- Damage to hearing from exposure to loud noise at work is preventable and risks can be controlled by good management.
- If people have to shout or have difficulty in being heard clearly by someone approx 2 metres away you may have a noise problem at work.

## WHAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN?

Employers have to reduce the risk of damage to employees' hearing and take specific actions where the noise exposure of their employees is at or above any of the action levels.

- As an employer the risks must be assessed and then measures identified to eliminate or reduce these risks and control exposures.
- Employees require information, instruction and training regarding the risks, control measures, hearing protection and safe working practices.
- Health surveillance (regular hearing checks) must also be provided for those at risk. An audiometric programme should consist of a baseline hearing test at the pre-employment stage, annual tests for the first two years of employment and then at three yearly intervals. More frequent testing may be required if significant changes in hearing level are detected or exposure conditions change.

References:2003/10/EC Physical Agents (Noise) directive, [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) plus the Noise Regulations

## Lack of alcohol policies

Four in 10 employers believe alcohol is a significant cause of absence and lost productivity. Yet a poll by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development found that four in 10 organisations had no policy in place to help manage this issue, with just 38% providing a co-ordinated rehabilitation, and only half providing access to counselling or OH Services.

Source: Occupational Health Magazine, Nov' 07, page 5

If you would like PTH to assist with an alcohol policy for your organisation, please contact Abi Chantry-Price on 01296 660630

## DID YOU KNOW THAT 75% OF THE SALT WE EAT IS ALREADY IN THE FOOD WE BUY?

Eating too much salt is bad for your health. This is because it can **raise your blood pressure**. Having high blood pressure triples your chances of heart disease and stroke.

Adults should eat no more than **6g** salt a day (about one level teaspoon).



## There are three ways that you can reduce the salt that you eat:

1. Don't add it to your food when cooking. Use herbs, spices and lemon juice to flavour food instead.
2. Don't add salt to your food at the table. Your taste buds will soon adapt to change and you may even find that you prefer the taste!
3. Check the nutrition labels when buying food. You will often see sodium listed rather than salt so watch out for that .6 grams of salt is equivalent to 2.5 grams of sodium.

Sources: Food Standards Agency and British Heart Foundation

To find out more visit: [www.salt.gov.uk](http://www.salt.gov.uk) and [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

## HEART DISEASE AND WEIGHT

If you're very overweight you're more likely to have a heart attack, especially if the extra weight is around your middle. The good news is that by losing weight you can cut your risk of heart disease considerably.

### What is heart disease?

The most common form of heart disease among adults is called coronary heart disease (CHD). It occurs when the coronary arteries bringing oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle get 'furred-up' by fatty deposits (atheroma)

**Angina** occurs when your heart does not receive enough blood and oxygen. An attack can be brought on by physical activity or emotional stress.

A **heart attack** occurs if a coronary artery becomes completely blocked, which can happen, for example, when a blood clot forms on a pre-existing atheroma.

**High blood pressure** increases your risk of heart disease, strokes and kidney disease. The cause of most high blood pressure is not clear but the following can all contribute: being overweight, excessive salt intake, drinking too much alcohol, physical inactivity.

**High blood cholesterol** increases your risk of CHD. The most common cause of high blood cholesterol is too much fat in the diet. Occasionally people have high levels due to an inherited condition.



**TO GREATLY REDUCE THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE YOU NEED TO AIM FOR 30 MINUTES OF MODERATE ACTIVITY AT LEAST FIVE TIMES A WEEK.**

(Source: British Heart Foundation)  
To find out more, visit: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

# PTH NEWSLETTER

Performance Through Health



## 21-25 JANUARY IS NATIONAL FOOD ALLERGY AND INTOLERANCE WEEK

Food allergy and food intolerance are both types of food sensitivity. When someone has a food allergy their immune system reacts to a particular food as if it isn't safe. If someone has a severe food allergy this can cause a life-threatening reaction.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction can vary, the most common symptoms include:

- coughing
- dry, itchy throat and tongue
- itchy skin or rash
- nausea and feeling bloated
- diarrhoea and/or vomiting
- wheezing and shortness of breath
- swelling of the lips and throat
- runny or blocked nose
- sore, red and itchy eyes

Symptoms can appear within minutes, or up to several hours after someone has eaten the food they are allergic to. If you think you have a food allergy or intolerance, then it's important to get a proper diagnosis. Don't cut food groups out of your diet without medical advice, because you could miss out on important nutrients.

Source: Food Standards Agency. To find out more visit:  
<http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthissues/foodintolerance/>

## DIABETES FIGURES ON THE RISE IN ENGLAND

The number of people diagnosed with diabetes in England has increased by approximately 70,000 in the past year alone, latest figures suggest.

The statistics from the charity 'The Information Centre for Health and Social Care' also showed there are now up to four million people in England who are registered as obese – a key contributor to diabetes - with GP practices.

In 2006-07, diabetes prevalence increased from 3.6% to 3.7%, or from 1,915,605 people diagnosed with the condition to 1,986,200, it calculated.

Douglas Smallwood, Chief Executive of the charity Diabetes UK, said:

"These figures are truly alarming as diabetes is a serious condition which can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke and nerve damage that can cause amputation.

"We need to do all we can to raise awareness of the condition and to encourage people to follow a healthy diet and active lifestyle to help them reduce the risk of developing diabetes.

"As the number of people being diagnosed is rising, we also need to remember that up to 750,000 people have diabetes in the UK and are not aware of it", he added. "This means that thousands of people are going about their daily lives unaware they have a condition that reduces their life expectancy".

Source: Occupational Health Magazine, Nov '07, page 7

## HEALTH AWARENESS DATES Jan – March 2008

## USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES

5 Jan	<b>Hypoparathyroidism UK</b> <a href="http://www.hypoparathyroidism.org.uk">www.hypoparathyroidism.org.uk</a>	<b>Health &amp; Safety Executive</b> <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/advice.htm">http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/advice.htm</a>
21-25 Jan	<b>Food Intolerance &amp; Food Allergy Week</b> <a href="http://www.allergyuk.org">www.allergyuk.org</a>	<b>Food Standards Agency</b> <a href="http://www.food.gov.uk">www.food.gov.uk</a>
21-25 Jan	<b>Cancertalk Week</b> <a href="http://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancertalk">www.macmillan.org.uk/cancertalk</a>	<b>British Heart Foundation</b> <a href="http://www.bhf.org.uk">www.bhf.org.uk</a>
24-30 Jan	<b>Leprosy Week</b> <a href="http://www.lepra.org.uk">www.lepra.org.uk</a>	<b>The Eatwell Plate (Food Standards Agency)</b> <a href="http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/">www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/</a>
28 Jan - 3 Feb	<b>Be Loud Campaign</b> <a href="http://www.beatingbowelcancer.org">www.beatingbowelcancer.org</a>	<b>BBC Health</b> <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/nutrition/">www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/nutrition/</a>
February 2008	<b>Raynaud's Awareness Month</b> <a href="http://www.raynauds.org.uk">www.raynauds.org.uk</a>	<b>BBC Good Food – Wellbeing</b> <a href="http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/wellbeing">www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/wellbeing</a>
11-17 Feb	<b>National Tinnitus Week</b> <a href="http://www.tinnitus.org.uk">www.tinnitus.org.uk</a>	<b>Diabetes UK</b> <a href="http://www.diabetes.org.uk/">http://www.diabetes.org.uk/</a>
23–29 Feb	<b>Obesity Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.toast-uk.org.uk">www.toast-uk.org.uk</a>	
March 2008	<b>Marie Curie Great Daffodil Appeal</b> <a href="http://www.mariecurie.org.uk">www.mariecurie.org.uk</a>	
2-8 March	<b>Endometriosis Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.endo.org.uk">www.endo.org.uk</a>	
3-9 March	<b>Glaucoma Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.iga.org.uk">www.iga.org.uk</a>	
10-16 March	<b>Prostate Cancer Charity</b> <a href="http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk">www.prostate-cancer.org.uk</a>	
12 March	<b>No Smoking Day</b> <a href="http://www.nosmokingday.org.uk">www.nosmokingday.org.uk</a>	

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