

Fragrance Sensitivities: What You Can Do

The EAP
is a **free** service
for you and your
eligible family members.

All EAP services are
**completely
confidential.**



National Headache Week - June 7-13, 2009

Did you know fragrances can cause some people to have headaches?

These sensitivities can be an issue for coworkers who suffer from fragrance allergies.

Here are some suggestions of how you can limit your exposure.

- Develop alternative methods of communication. Work via email, phone, or fax as much as possible to limit contact.
- Use a portable fan. A small fan can blow stagnant air away.
- Try an air purifier. Air cleaners and purification units are less efficient in a cubicle situation than in a private office where you can shut the door.
- See if you can change your workstation location. Either

move away from the fragrance or from a common area where people congregate. Being in contact with fewer people will mean less exposure to fragrances overall, and that can help.

- Ask about a different work schedule. Going in to work at 6 a.m., for example, usually means you will have less contact with co-workers. And leaving earlier in the day reduces the amount of time you will be exposed, which gives your body a better chance to recuperate after exposures.
- Build awareness of the issue. By informing people of fragrance sensitivities, without singling out one person, people will hopefully be more selective about what they wear in the work environment. ✨

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June is Effective Communication Month



Pathways to Better Understanding

Often we think of communication as a series of one-way trips. One person imparts information and another one receives it. But true communication is a give and take between two or more people.

Create a Positive Climate for Communication

You will be a more effective communicator if you regularly:

- Show fellow employees they can trust that you will not embarrass them or use their words against them.
- Avoid judging employees' opinions unnecessarily.
- Giving and receiving feedback is a key communication skill that helps to develop a business or work relationship.
- Ask clarifying questions. "Could you give me an example of that?"
- Restate the other person's point. "So you mean..."
- Use body language that shows you're listening.

Invite Responses

- "What do you think of this?"
- "Do you see what I'm saying?"
- "How do you feel about that?"

Communication Tips

When communicating directly with a person or group:

- Check out your assumptions about what the other person already knows. Communication quickly shuts down when one person doesn't know what the other is talking about.
- To communicate better, use appropriate language. Consider the person's background, ability, age and work experience. Avoid jargon that may be unfamiliar to the other person.
- Pick an appropriate time and place that's free from distractions so that you can listen and respond. If the subject is personal, find a private place.
- Express your thoughts and feelings clearly. People are bombarded with messages every moment of the day. To compete with the noise, your message needs to be clear and to the point.

Go Beyond Words

Watch the emotional content of your criticism. One person can criticize and leave an individual feeling good, if the criticism is upbeat. Another could use the same words and leave the individual feeling angry or depressed.

Consider these unspoken messages both in yourself and in others:

1. Tone of voice:
 - Urgency
 - Hesitancy
 - Stammering
 - Belligerence
 - Amusement
2. Body language:
 - Eye contact
 - Arms folded protectively
 - Direct, confident eye contact
 - Leaning forward aggressively
 - Nervous fidgeting

If tone and body language give a different message from the words, find out what's behind the inconsistency.

Listen Actively

In his book, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*, author Daniel Goleman says one of the best ways to relate to people is to become a better listener.

- Use every conversation as an opportunity to develop listening skills.
- Indicate you are following the point by providing feedback: "I see." "That makes sense."

Good communication skills take practice. The more you communicate, the better you get at it. ✨

Summertime Safety & Travel

Practice Sun Safety, Whatever Your Age

You're never too old for the sun's rays to harm your skin. In fact, sun exposure is especially dangerous for aging skin, says Jerome Z. Litt, M.D., author of *Your Skin From A to Z*. "The skin is like a sponge and a bank. It soaks up all the rays and stores them forever," he says. "Because seniors' skin is so much thinner than younger people's skin, more rays are able to penetrate." So be sure to protect your skin from the sun's damaging rays:

- Avoid direct sunlight when it's strongest, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Wear protective clothing, such as broad-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sunglasses that filter out ultraviolet (UV) light.
- Use sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher. Apply it liberally to exposed areas, including bald areas of your scalp.
- Avoid sunlamps and tanning booths.

Volunteer Vacations

An online poll by Travelocity found that 38 percent of travelers say they intend to volunteer while vacationing this year. That's up from 11 percent in 2007. Hundreds of organizations offer excursions that mix nice accommodations with half-day service stints in foreign lands.

But the do-good week is not always cheap. In spite of Spartan accommodations at some locations, prices begin at up to \$1,000 a week.

The editors of *Smart Money* say the best deals are available through travel companies. They have specialists who can suggest trips. *

Sunscreen smarts

No matter what time of year, you should remember to put on sunscreen when you spend time outdoors. Here are tips from the Skin Cancer Foundation on getting the most from your sunscreen:

- Choose a sunscreen that will protect you against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Spread the sunscreen evenly on all skin that is exposed to the sun. Don't scrimp on how much sunscreen you use.
- Don't forget to apply sunscreen to your lips, ears, neck, hands, feet and scalp if your hair is thinning.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or more frequently if you have been swimming, sweating or using a towel to dry off.

Bus and Train Travel Increased

Amtrak and bus ridership was way up in 2008, but travel via the airlines was down.

According to the Department of Commerce Office of Travel and Tourism, the most-visited destinations by U.S. residents flying abroad were, in order of volume, Mexico, Canada, United Kingdom, Italy, France, Germany, Japan, Jamaica, the People's Republic of China, and Spain. Note that the most popular foreign destinations for Americans can be reached by train or bus.

Worldwide Travel trends for 2009, according to JWT ad agency, show the most popular destinations to be the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Canada, Spain, Italy, Costa Rica, Iceland, Colombia and the United Kingdom. *

Your risk for melanoma, a deadly form of skin cancer, rises if you have fair skin or hair, a family history of melanoma, a history of severe, blistering sunburns in youth, more than 50 moles and a particular form of mole called dysplastic nevi.

Along with a yearly skin exam by your doctor, you should examine your skin every three months. Ask a friend or relative to check areas you can't see or reach.

"Look for any changes in the skin, such as spots that bleed, crust, itch or change in texture," Dr. Litt says. Other common warning signs: new growths, sores that don't heal, and changes in the size, shape or color of moles and birthmarks.

Skin cancer can occur anywhere, but it's most common in the places that have been exposed to the sun the most (such as the head, face, neck, arms, and hands). If you notice anything suspicious, visit your doctor. *

National Parks Offer Economical Vacations

Parks offer great vacations at a price far lower than many resorts. For the best room rates, call the park of your choice directly.

The lowest-price vacations – and possibly the most fun – involve pitching a tent at one of their great campsites for about \$19 a night. And the scenery is spectacular. Most parks offer free activities, lectures and nature walks.

Go to: www.nps.gov, to search for national parks in your area. *

First-Time Home Buyers Get \$8,000 Tax Credit

For those considering becoming a first-time home buyer, the Federal Government is willing to give you 8,000 reasons to do so as long as you act fast. First time home buyers who purchase a home on or after January 1, 2009 and before December 1, 2009 will be given up to an \$8,000 tax credit for their purchase as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.



home's purchase price, up to \$8,000. Single taxpayers with incomes up to \$75,000 and married couples who earn up to \$150,000 qualify for the full tax credit. Unlike the tax credit from last year, this one does not have to be repaid.

To inquire about details on this tax credit, utilize the Home Ownership Program offered through

Enhanced Benefits Group and your employer. Simply call 1-866-505-3244 or visit www.ebgi.org for a free, no obligation consultation. *

The tax credit is equal to 10% of the

Two Recession Must-Haves

Al Neuharth, founder of *USA Today*, says the must-haves are realism and optimism. Having lived through many recessions and one depression, the 84-year-old has some sound advice.

- Realism means tightening your belt. Spend only what is necessary and funnel what you can into the future.
- Optimism means investing now in everything worthwhile you can afford, such as new ideas and new products. Neuharth says the best time to market anything new is during a recession.

If you invest in the future, the best of times are ahead for you, he says.

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How to Use Your EAP

When help is needed call 1-800-433-2320. The office coordinator will ask for your name, employer and a brief description of your presenting concern. If an emergency exists you will be given immediate assistance. If your situation is not an emergency, you will be offered telephone assistance and/or in-person sessions to complete an assessment and make a referral for treatment if needed.

Meetings with your counselor are completely confidential. Your employer will not know you have used the EAP. No one will be provided any information about you without your written consent. Exceptions would occur only in the event of you being considered dangerous to yourself or someone else.

At the first appointment you should be prepared to give the counselor some background information to assist in formulating an action plan. Many people find it helpful to prepare a list of things they wish to discuss at each session.

PORTLAND:
503-639-3009

SALEM:
503-588-0777

If you live outside the Portland/Willamette Valley areas, call the toll free number listed below. You will be referred to a mental health provider in your area.

1-800-433-2320
www.cascadecenter.com



Please direct your questions or comments regarding this newsletter to this address:

EAP News Editor,
c/o Cascade Centers, Inc.,
7180 S.W. Fir Loop, Suite 1-A,
Portland, Oregon 97223

or via email to:
info@cascadecenter.com