

August 1, 1999

EAP News # 63

ANGRY ?



The higher you score on the anger scale, devised by researchers at Harvard University School of Public Health, the more likely you are to develop heart disease. Below is the test they developed to help you assess your risk. Answer true or false to the following questions and then rank yourself according to your responses:

1. At times I feel like swearing.
2. At times I feel like smashing things.
3. Often I can't understand why I have been so irritable and grouchy.
4. At times I feel like picking a fistfight with someone.
5. I easily become impatient with people.
6. I am often said to be hotheaded.
7. I am often so annoyed when someone tries to get ahead of me in line that I speak to that person about it.
8. I have at times had to be rough with people who were rude or annoying.
9. I am often very sorry because I am so irritable and grouchy.
10. It makes me angry to have people hurry me.
11. I am very stubborn.
12. Sometimes I get so angry and upset that I don't know what comes over me.
13. I have gotten angry and broken furniture or dishes when I was drinking.
14. I have become so angry with someone that I have felt as if I would explode.
15. I've been so angry at times that I've hurt someone in a physical fight.
16. I almost never lose self-control.

To determine your anger ranking, give yourself one point for every "true" to statements 1 through 15 and one point for a "false" to statement 16.

Ranking grades:

- 0-1:** About the risk an average person faces.
- 2-4:** 2.7 times the risk of having an anger-induced heart attack.
- 5-16:** 3.4 times the risk of an average person.

If your anger ranking puts you at risk, what can you do? According to Dr. Ichiro Kawachi, lead researcher in the study, you must learn to take control of your emotions. "Sometimes just verbalizing the problem reduces stress and temper outbursts," he says. It may be cliché, but try counting to ten.

The important thing, say the experts, is to make a conscious effort to think about controlling stress and anger in your life.

TATTOO REMOVAL

If you once got yourself tattooed and now wish you hadn't, see your dermatologist. There are several laser techniques for removing tattoos that leave virtually no scarring. However, it will cost you a thousand dollars or more to erase your colorful past.

CAN MAGNETS RELIEVE PAIN?

Magnets have been used to relieve pain for more than 2,000 years, but only recently have they been tested in a controlled study.

In the study, 50 patients who were experiencing postpolio syndrome were divided into two groups. One group wore magnets on their skin over the pain site; the others wore fake magnets. Those who wore the real magnets reported less pain.

How did they work? "I wish I knew," says study co-author Carlos Vallbona, MD, professor at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. The Magnets may increase blood flow to the site; they may affect nerve receptors or they may trigger the release of endorphins – the "feel good" chemicals.

The magnets used in the study were 300 to 500 gauss – about 7 to 10 times the strength of refrigerator magnets.

Some Scientists question the validity of the study because the number of people was small.

EAP NEWSLETTER

DO YOUR FEET HURT?

WHO DO YOU GO SEE?

Podiatrists are not technically medical doctors (MD's); orthopedists are. Podiatrists do earn a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) from a school of podiatry. The first two years are identical to those of a MD, says Phil Ward, DPM, President of the North Carolina Podiatric Medicine Society. The last two years of schooling, says Ward, focus on the general and surgical procedures of the lower extremities. After passing exams, they may be certified to any of a number of Podiatric Boards.

Orthopedists complete medical school, a surgical internship, and then have an additional four years of surgical training on the musculoskeletal system. After passing exams, they are certified by a single certifying board.

The Walking Magazine says that while the typical Orthopedist has more training the typical Podiatrist has probably treated more feet.

CHILDREN NEED SUNSCREEN

The incidence of melanoma, the most dangerous type of skin cancer, has risen 20-fold since the 1930's. Back then, people used to wear long sleeve clothing, and sunbathing was not popular.

Many parents don't know three important things about sun exposure:

- ? 80% of what a person gets in a lifetime occurs before 18 years of age.
- ? Sun damage is cumulative. Each exposure adds up.
- ? Sunburn at an early age is the major factor responsible for later development of melanoma.

Children should be wearing sunscreen whenever they are outside. Broad-brimmed hats and protective clothing also help.



TV TANS



All those dark tans you see on Baywatch are not real. According to Sun & Skin, most cast members use strong sunscreens when filming outdoors. Their natural-looking tans are the result of self-tanning lotions that tint the skin.

Sunscreen Myths

Proper use of a sunscreen is your best bet against skin cancer. But there are a number of misconceptions regarding use of sunscreens and protecting yourself from the sun's harmful rays. The following is a list of the 5 most popular misconceptions.

Myth 1 - Wearing sunscreen causes overheating during exercise. In a study of 22 male students, thickly coated with a SPF 15 sunscreen, exercising vigorously for 45 minutes in 90 degree temperatures, both skin and core temperatures were lower than those exercising without sunscreen.

Myth 2 - Cloudy days and water submersion eliminate the need for sunscreen. Up to 80% of ultraviolet radiation penetrates cloud cover and up to 50% reaches swimmers in water. Water-resistant and waterproof formulations will resist water for 40 to 80 minutes.

Myth 3 - SPF values greater than 15 are overkill. An SPF of 30 is significantly superior to an SPF of 15 at preventing early DNA damage to skin. Also, high SPF values compensate for sweating, loss in the water and thin application.

Myth 4 - Sunscreens cause allergic reactions. The 1% to 2% of people allergic to sunscreens react mostly to fragrances, preservatives and other substances, not the skin-blocking ingredients. Those persons should experiment with various brands.

Myth 5 - Clothing or hats are as good as sunscreens. Loosely woven fabrics transmit up to 30% of ultraviolet radiation, and wet fabrics increase transmission. As for hats, they need to have brims of at least 3 inches all the way around. Forget baseball-type hats.

HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals who have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.
