Do Cell Phones Kill?

You thought receiving your cell bill every month was something to worry about?

What about those horror stories about car wrecks caused by distracted drivers while on their cell phone; or a malignant brain tumor caused by having a cell phone; all the warning signs like: turn the cell phone off on the airplane and don’t use your cell phone from inside a hospital. So the question lies, how real are the risks?

Brain Cancer

Is cell phone use causing brain cancer? There are a few high profile lawsuits alleging it does.

One example is from a Maryland neurologist claiming that cell phone use caused him to develop brain cancer. His attorney presented a study by a Swedish cancer researcher indicating it is likely that there is a connection between the two. However, the defense attorney had several studies themselves, and eventually the suit was thrown out of court.

Regardless, there are those who are worried cell phone use does cause cancer. Cell phones produce an electromagnetic radiation which penetrates the brain.

Kids’n Computers

For years you heard your mom say “stand up straight and don’t slouch”. Now thousands of people are currently experiencing back and neck problems…is it because they didn’t listen to their mothers….or because of the endless number of hours we spend on the computer?

Parents should continue to address posture issues with their kids now more than ever. Kids are spending more and more time at the computer, often at workstations that are not designed specifically for them. Ergonomics refers to fitting the computer workstation to the individual, not the individual to the workstation. Simple ergonomic adjustments to the chair, monitor and letter size can alleviate common stresses and strains.

Make sure that the child is seated in an adjustable chair at a height that allows him to keep the arms and the wrists in a neutral position. The monitor and keyboard should also be aligned directly in front of the chair. A child’s legs should not be allowed to dangle, so provide a footrest or use telephone books to prop the feet. Also, a larger font size can be helpful in alleviating eyestrain.

History has proved that prolonged improper computer use can adversely affect adults, therefore the only sensible solution to prevent computer computer injury with our children is through parental awareness and education.

The continuing saga of “What’s in a Name…”

- Janice Plemons

It’s been quite a while since Gina Frasca shared the history of RM&S with the campus community. Many of you may recall the first article that shared the whirlwind travels of how our department had gone from three names to one. Over the past year, we have had some big changes and thought it would be helpful to revisit this story.

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Gel Candles

Some of us have probably played with candle wax when we were younger. Pouring the wax on our hand or on a flat surface and then making shapes from it. When you think about it, it really wasn’t safe to play with hot wax. Especially, with the new gel candles out, playing with hot wax will never be the same.

The gel in the candle gets really hot, and is known to flare up, spill, and splatter. Some gel candle holders have even shattered, throwing hot gel everywhere. That’s exactly what happened to the young lady in this photo. A burning gel candle “exploded” all over her hand, leaving her with no feeling and probably requiring surgery.

A word of caution... be very careful when using gel candles in your home. If not, this could happen to you!! So think twice before using it, especially if you have young ones running around.

http://safetycenter.navy.mil/photo/photo61.htm

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Industrial Safety Corner

From 1979 – 1999, excessive heat exposure caused 8,015 deaths in the United States. As an industrial or trades worker, your job may include working outside where you are exposed to the elements. Only you can protect yourself from the effects of the beating sun. Workers are asked to be proactive in reducing their exposure during these hot summer months.

The sun is the first and foremost villain to be aware of. Sunlight contains ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which causes premature aging of the skin, cataracts, and skin cancer. Here’s how to block those harmful rays: Cover up. Wear tightly woven clothing that you can’t see through. Use sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 percent of UV rays. Be sure to follow the directions on the bottle or tube. A sunburn can really hamper your productivity the following day. Not to mention that it makes sleeping and showering a bit uncomfortable. Wear a hat. A wide brim hat, not a baseball cap, works best because it protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp. Wear UV-absorbent shades. Sunglasses don’t have to be expensive, but they should block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation. Limit exposure. UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Next, the heat from the sun is what we worry about most for our workers. Heat and Humidity are really effective in causing serious health concerns. Here are a few precautions that you can take to reduce your incidence of heat exposure: drink plenty of water BEFORE you get thirsty, wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing, take frequent, short breaks in cool shade, eat smaller meals before work activity, and avoid caffeine and alcohol or large amounts of sugar. Find out from your health-care provider if your medications and heat don’t mix. Know that your employer, your job may include working outside where you are exposed to the elements. Only you can protect yourself from the effects of the beating sun. Workers are asked to be proactive in reducing their exposure during these hot summer months.

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Reduce the Risk! One-Minute Reminder!

If a student, employee, or visitor is injured or becomes acutely ill when on campus, please contact the University Police at ext. 4567 immediately. The University Police are trained to assess the situation and to determine if there is a need for medical attention.

When an employee is injured or becomes acutely ill, the order of notice is:

#1 – University Police – ext. 4567
#2 – Employee’s Supervisor

The employee’s supervisor is responsible for notifying Human Resources (ext. 4412 or 4425). University Police are responsible for notifying Risk Management & Safety in order for that department to conduct an investigation, if necessary. If the employee requires medical attention and is unable to drive themselves, transportation will be provided by ambulance if their condition is serious, or by the appropriate department administrator (MPP level).

Survive a Heart Attack!

We were taught in our CPR class how to revive someone that is choking or having a heart attack. But what if the person that needs to be revitalized is you and no one is around to lend a hand? What is one to do? How does one survive a heart attack on their own if they only have 10 seconds left before they lose their consciousness?

This article will provide valid information that was not taught to us in CPR classes regarding how to survive a heart attack when unaided.

How does someone perform CPR on themself? The victim must cough repeatedly and very vigorously (A deep breath should be taken before each cough), repeating this about every 2 seconds or until the heart starts beating normal. The cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. This may sound absurd, but it will help. The deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital.

Tell as many other people as possible about this, it could save their lives!

From Health Cares, Rochester General Hospital via Chapter 240s newsletter AND THE BEAT GOES ON ... (reprint from The Mended Hearts, Inc. publication, Heart Response)

Keyboard Cooties

Who would have thought that something we touch on a regular basis is filled with grimy bacteria and germs, greasy food crumbs, flakes of skin, and other nasty unmentionable gunk. This may surprise some, if not, all of you.

We are not talking about public toilets that everyone shares, but the keyboards in our offices. What you are about to read will disgust you after you find out what is living inside of your keyboard.

THE SUBJECT

At TechTV, there is one computer in particular shared by many people. While working they eat their lunch, drink their coffee, and whatever else they do while typing...not to mention, it's located near the bathroom. TechTV thought this computer would make the best test subject.
DO CELL PHONE’S KILL?
Continued, Page 1

However, the radiation frequency range is low and it’s not as if the brain is being baked. The radiation from cell phones is unlike the radiation from an X-ray machine, which does damage DNA and is clearly linked to cancer.

As David Ropeik, the Director of Risk Communications at the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis said, “The research is unequivocal that this type of radiation doesn’t cause cancer. But it hits a bunch of emotionally resonant buttons, so we’re all afraid of it.”

Hospital equipment?
If someone made a phone call in a hospital waiting room, would that cause someone in the hospital room above them to go code blue?

According to several studies, the possibility is slim to none. One study in particular, released in January 2001, researchers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., tested cell phones with hospital devices that monitor heart and lung activity. The phones did cause interference, but not enough to cause concern.

Dr. David Haynes, one of the study’s authors, said the tests were done “in vitro,” meaning patients weren’t connected to the machines. The test must be done when patients are actually connected to the devices. Until such tests have been done, it is necessary to have signs up that read “NO CELL PHONES.”

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Airplanes?
It may seem silly that a tiny cell phone can interfere with the airplane’s course. Is there anyway to safeguard it from occurring?

There are two main reasons why everyone is obligated to turn off their phone on an airplane. According to the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), cell phone use is banned because they could wreak havoc with cell phone systems on the ground. The Federal Aviation Administration supports the FCC, believing that cell phones may interfere with navigation and other aircraft systems.

In incident reports by airline crews, NASA’s Aviation Safety Reporting System’s “Passenger Electronic Devises Database Report Set,” contains reports involving passengers whose “personal electronic devices” created disturbances in aircrafts’ electronic systems.

In controlled tests done in February 2000, by Britain’s Civil Aviation Authority, reports showed cell phones can interfere with avionic equipment and the exact position on the airplane makes a difference. The level of interference varied as cell phones were moved throughout the aircraft.

Cell phones and driving?
Many cities and one state now require drivers to use a hands-free headset while driving. But what is the real problem: having two hands free, or the lack of concentration while driving?

It’s not the lack of one hand that’s the trouble, it’s the telephone conversation while driving that actually hampers the ability to drive.

According to the New England Journal of Medicine in February 1997, researchers cross-checked cell phone records and accident records in a 14-month period. They found that driver’s risk of crashing while using a cell phone was four times greater than the risk without the phone. Additionally, driver’s utilizing the hands-free headsets crashed just as often, with both hands free.

There is plenty of research showing that doing things like memory, reasoning, and arithmetic tasks while driving seriously hampers the ability to drive. As David Strayer, a researcher at the University of Utah, put college undergrads in driving simulators while talking on the cell phone, their driving suffered.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?
Continued, Page 1

Since our last update... “What’s in a name?”… Gina Frasca has moved onward and upward on her journey from Associate Director to Director of Risk Management & Safety. Deborah Smith was our Risk Management Specialist and has traveled up the ladder to Risk Manager for Risk Management & Safety. Debbie High was the Administrative Assistant for EH&OS and has moved on to Safety Officer. You can also refer to her as the Ergo Queen.

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- Peter Valdes-Dapena/CNN

**KEYBOARD COOTIES**
Continued, Page 2

The keyboard was sent to UC Berkeley School of Public Health, to Fenyoung Liu, a microbiologist. Liu swabbed the spacebar and cultured the keys in a plain agar dish, along with blood-laced agar that helps simulate how bacteria grows in the human body.

**THE RESULT**
After two weeks, the result showed growth – nasty blob-like growth along with one growth that took over the entire dish.

Liu and his researchers were astonished, describing their findings as “gram-positive... not gram-negative.” In English terms this simply means the keyboard was free of E.coli and salmonella, which can cause severe sickness or death. However, the cultures did produce a large amount of gram-positive bacteria, which can include staphylococcus. Without DNA testing, Liu can’t tell us if the keyboard actually has the potential to spread these diseases.

Remember, the keyboard is not clean. Germs and bacteria exist everywhere. Use anti-bacterial wipes or alcohol wipes to kill bacteria around your desk, and all other frequently touched zones.

So before you use your hands, WASH THEM!

- Peter Valdes-Dapena/CNN

Cal State San Marcos “Safety Sense” Summer/Fall ’03 • Page 03
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sit Safe</td>
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<td>ALL EMPLOYEES</td>
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<td>September 18, 2003</td>
<td>2:30PM - 3:30PM</td>
<td>USB Conference Room</td>
<td>Facilities, IITS, VPA Staff</td>
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<td>Subpoenas</td>
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<td>Radiation Safety</td>
<td>September 4, 2003</td>
<td>3:00 PM - 4:00 PM</td>
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<td>9:30 AM - 11:00 AM</td>
<td>Commons 206</td>
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Please call Jodi Tres at 750-4502 to reserve your space in any of the trainings.