

Case Department of Occupational and Environmental Safety

“Safety Comes First”

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HOLIDAY
SPECIAL
EDITION

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Frantic Over Finals? Some Stress- Busting Tips from D.O.E.S.

Final exam stress can rear its uglyhead even for the most prepared student. Unfortunately, final exam season comes equipped with all kinds of additional headaches, from all-nighters and highlighters to study sessions and final deadlines. If this is your first finals week at Case or, if you've been known to reach for the caffeine, Advil, Krispy Kremes, or Immodium AD as part of your final exam week study ritual, here are some hints to help you cope and stay healthy during finals week. First and foremost, try not to leave things until the last minute and develop a realistic time table for hitting the books. This will help you avoid a lot of the last minute cramming and as a result of being well-prepared, you'll go into exam week feeling more confident. Balance out your study schedule: leave time for fun and relaxation during finals week to avoid burning out. When you start to feel tired and hazy while you are studying allow yourself to take a short break. You'll be more relaxed and refreshed when you return to your work. Rather than reaching for a cup of coffee or a fizzy soda to perk you up, try some moderate and regular exercise. Working out can boost your energy levels throughout the day and will also help to clear your mind as well as reduce stress and anxiety. Make sure to eat well and sleep well. It is important to both feed your brain and rest it. Try to get *at least* 6 hours of sleep a night. Here are some other helpful and healthy hints to keep in mind as you study for finals or for any other exams throughout the year:

Believe in yourself: You've made it this far, because you belong here at Case and in each one of your classes. There is no reason to worry excessively. (continued on page 2)

Highlights in this issue:

- Final exam stress— what can you do about it
- Holiday decorations— decorate with safety in mind
- Tales from the lab— wearing contacts
- Radiation news: pregnancy precautions





Healthy Study Tips (*Continued from p. 1*)

Prepare for your exams and you will do fine.

You do NOT have to be perfect: Aim to do your best, but no one can be perfect all of the time. Believing that “anything less than an A” means that you have failed just puts added pressure and unnecessary stress on yourself during an already stressful time.

Keep everything in perspective: Even though exams seem like the most important thing while you are in the midst of taking them, remember that they are only a small part of the big picture.

Do not keep things bottled up: If you are feeling particularly stressed, confiding in someone close to you can make you feel so much better. Turn to the people who are most supportive of you.

Ask for help if you need it: If you are having trouble with any of your course material, worrying about it will not help. Lean on your classmates or a tutor. When it comes to taking the exam itself there are several things that you can do to handle the stress of exam taking. Plan to arrive at the classroom early and make sure to bring all of the necessary equipment with you (calculators, sharpened pencils, blue books, etc.). Take a deep breath before you begin your exam and read the instructions and questions carefully. Make a plan for taking the exam and be sure to leave enough time to tackle each question,

problem, or essay. Begin with the questions you are most confident about answering.

Avoid panic. Close your eyes and take some deep breaths to calm yourself if you feel overly nervous for a quick and easy way to alleviate stress. This will help you stay clearly focused on your exam. If you have to, give yourself a bit of a pep talk. Slowing down your breathing often helps if your mind goes blank on a question. If, after a minute, you still have trouble recalling the information, move on to another question and return to the troubling question later.

After an exam, give yourself some time to relax and congratulate yourself on completing a difficult task. Try not to be over-critical. We are our own worst critics and can often be far too harsh on ourselves. Rather than criticizing yourself if you think you could have done better, try to learn from your mistakes and if you feel anxious after your exam, make sure to talk with someone. Do not over-celebrate after an early exam so that you do not tire yourself out, and be considerate; others may be studying even if your finals are over.

If you are truly frantic over finals and overwhelmed, there are places to turn to. University Counseling Services (Sears 201) can be reached at 368-5872. A counselor is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 844-8892 and ask for the University counselor on-call.

“Believing that ‘anything less than an A’ means you have failed just puts added pressure on you.”

Holiday Safety

With the holidays fast upon us, be especially aware of increased fire hazards. Here are some safety measures to keep in mind:

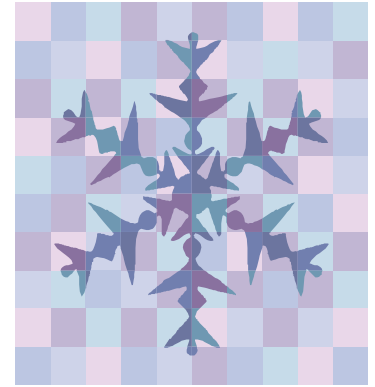
1. Decorations must be flame-proofed or made of non-flammable material.
2. If decorating a live tree, be sure to:
 - use a fresh evergreen that has been treated with a flame retardant.
 - equip it with a tree stand that can hold water at the base of the tree; keep it full.
 - remove the tree prior to closing for break.

No electrical equipment or devices are permitted on or under trees; only indirect lighting may be used. Nor are candles or open flames allowed on, under, or within 10 feet of the tree. SEVERAL fires at Case have started this way in the past.

3. If using a metallic tree or decoration, do not place electrical lights or objects on it.
4. Decoration materials must not be exposed to lightbulbs, heaters, or other heat or flames.
5. Gift wrappings should be removed right away.
6. Door decorations must not overlap the top, bottom, or sides of doors.
7. Do not leave lights unattended.
8. Do not place **any** decorations where they would hinder access to safety equipment (fire alarms, extinguishers) or exits.

REMEMBER that if a fire does occur:

- Warn/remove people in danger
- Activate a pull alarm (usually near exits).
- Call Protective Services at x3333 and give a complete description of the fire (continued on page 4)



“Turn off lights or other electric devices when not in your office or room.”



Holiday Safety (continued from page 3)

8. Do not place **any** decorations where they would hinder access to safety equipment (fire alarms, extinguishers) or exits.

REMEMBER that if a fire does occur:

- Warn/remove people in danger
- Activate a pull alarm (usually near exits).
- Call Protective Services at x3333 and give a complete description of the fire and location. **DO NOT CALL 911.**
- If the fire is manageable, and **ONLY if you have been trained**, use your fire extinguisher on it. Only attempt to put out the fire **after** the alarm has been sounded and the evacuation of the building has begun. If you are **NOT** trained to use the fire extinguisher, sound the fire alarm and get out of the building.
- Enjoy the holidays and, **BE SAFE.**

“If you are not trained to use the fire extinguisher, sound the fire alarm and get out of the building”

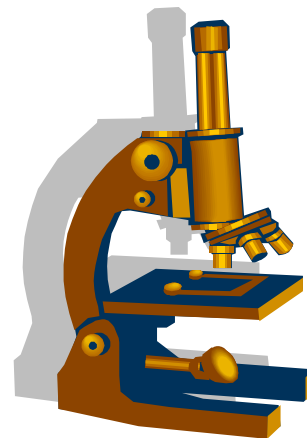


Tales from the Lab...

It was 9 a.m. the Wednesday at a university before Thanksgiving, when Ida Petersberg hurried into the lab to finish some research before heading home to Omaha, Nebraska for the holiday break. So excited to board a plane at 1:30 in the afternoon and to see her family and all of her friends from high school, Ida did not even notice that she was still wearing her contact lenses even though she knew that she would be working with hazardous chemicals. As Ida reached up to grab a container of liquid phenol from the top shelf, the container leaked right in her left eye. The liquid phenol became trapped in the capillary space between Ida's contact lens and the cornea of her eye. As a result, she was unable to wash the chemical from the surface of her eye and muscle spasms made it nearly impossible to remove her contact lens. Disciplinary action was taken against the lab supervisor who failed to enforce chemical safety eye-protective requirements and Ida spent the Thanksgiving holiday at the hospital undergoing treatment.

“Contacts are not to be worn by persons exposed to hazardous chemicals”

The lesson? **Contact lenses are not to be worn by persons exposed to hazardous chemicals.** It is the responsibility of the supervisor to identify employees who wear contact lenses. Also, supplies of caustic chemicals should never be stored higher than countertop level to minimize the possibility of facial and upper body burns in the event that a container breaks or spills. Don't let this Tale from the Lab happen to you! Wear your glasses in the lab and follow eye safety procedures. Tune in next issue for another simulated **Tale from the Lab...**



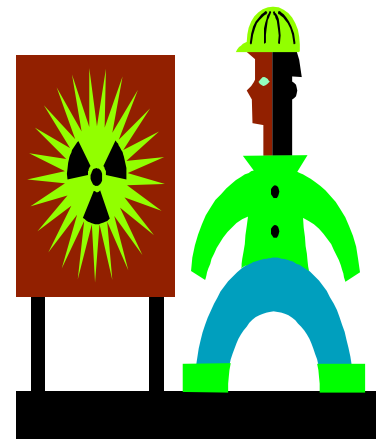
Radiation News: Pregnancy Precautions

Any pregnant radiation worker who plans to continue working with radiosopes during her pregnancy may inform the Radiation Safety Office and her supervisor in writing of her pregnancy and the estimated date of conception as soon as the pregnancy is known. This declaration lowers the permissible dose limits for radiation workers from 5000 mRem per year to 500 mRem for the entire gestation period.

“Declaring one’s pregnancy is voluntary; however, it is strongly encouraged”

If she chooses to declare her pregnancy, the worker will receive a fetal badge to be worn at the waist in addition to her body badge. The embryo/fetus dose limit after declaring pregnancy is approximately 50 mRem per month. Fetal badges are exchanged monthly by the Radiation Safety Office.

Declaring one’s pregnancy is voluntary; however, **it is strongly encouraged**. Receiving a fetal badge is also voluntary, but it more accurately reflects the fetal dose. Otherwise, your highest badge reading is automatically assigned to the fetus. Even if you choose to wear a fetal badge in addition to your body badge, notify us of your pregnancy so we can monitor your body badge in accordance with fetal/embryo exposure limits.



Contact the Radiation Safety Office (x2906) if you have any questions or would like a current copy of the NRC Regulatory Guide 8.13, “Instructions Concerning Prenatal Radiation Exposure.”





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