RCTC Student Health Service

The Buzz

February 2009

Ice or Heat for an Injury: Which is It Anyway?

Perhaps you sprained your wrist when you slipped on the ice. Or maybe all that shoveling has left you with a sore back. However it happened, you have an injury and it hurts. Now what? The following injury self-care guidelines can help speed your recovery time.

Use cold first. It restricts blood flow to an injured area and reduces muscle spasms, pain and swelling. In general, ice should be used for the first 48 hours after an injury. Apply an ice pack for about 10 minutes at a time, three or four times a day. Put a layer of cloth between the ice pack and your skin to prevent frostbite! (Tip: Next time you're in the grocery store, pick up an extra bag of frozen peas to keep on hand as an ice pack. It's inexpensive and re-freezes easily.)

Heat promotes healing after the initial swelling has subsided, so wait at least two days after the injury before using it. Apply heat to the injured area for 15-20 minutes up to three times a day. Again, protect your skin with a layer of cloth between you and the heat.

UCR Blood Drive 2-19-09

Call 507-284-4475 to pre-register!

The Road to a Healthy Heart

February is the month when thoughts turn to love and other matters of the heart. It's appropriate, then, that since 1963, February has officially been designated American Heart Month. It's a time to focus on keeping your heart healthy and reducing your risk of developing heart disease. Heart disease is the number one killer of Americans, both women and men. It kills more Americans than all forms of cancer, combined. But do college students really need to worry about heart disease? You betcha!

Heart disease is often the result of lifestyle habits that began at an early age - even during the teens and twenties! Age, gender, and heredity are risks that are out of our control. Heart-healthy lifestyle changes can, however, reduce your risk of heart disease.

If you smoke, quit! Yes, quitting is hard, but it is so worth it. Smoking is the number one preventable cause of heart disease, not to mention lung cancer and emphysema. The good news is that there are plenty of resources to help you quit - the first step is to ask. For more information, visit RCTC Health Service's website.

Eat healthy and be active. Living heart-healthy doesn't mean starving yourself or even joining a gym. It means eating plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains and limiting high-fat foods. It also means getting at least 30 minutes of moderate activity each day. This may be as easy as parking at the back of the lot, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and taking the dog for a walk.

Check in with your healthcare provider! High cholesterol and high blood pressure levels raise your risk for heart disease, but you can't know if your levels are high unless you get them checked. Cholesterol levels should be checked at least every five years. Check with your healthcare provider if yours should be checked. If it's been a while since you've had your blood pressure checked, stop by Student Health Service (HS140). It only takes a few minutes.

Preventing heart disease is a life-long process but it's never too late to get on the road to a healthy heart. The sooner a heart-healthy lifestyle is adopted, the smoother the ride will be.

"If you don't do what's best for your body, you're the one who comes up on the short end." ~ Julius Erving, ("Dr. J")