

Health Promotion Newsletter



Newsletter of the Health Promotion Group

Autumn/Winter 2008

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Health Promotion Group

The Health Promotion Group continues to develop health awareness and promote good health within the University.

The group is convened by Professor Amanda Amos, Professor of Health Promotion in Public Health Sciences, and new faces on the group include Louise Campbell, Deputy Director of the Centre for Sport and Exercise, Alison McNaught, College of Science and Engineering, and Deborah Ritchie, College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Group meets regularly to discuss, develop, evaluate and review health related initiatives which will be of benefit and interest to University staff. If you've got any ideas for health related initiatives which you'd like the University to consider developing, please contact any of the members of the Health Promotion Group to discuss. Contact details at <http://www.safety.ed.ac.uk/resources/Health/group.shtm>

Please give Blood!



The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) have launched the 2008 appeal for people in Scotland to donate blood over the festive period.

The festive season creates a "Donor Deficit", as people are busy with shopping, parties and other festivities. Last year donations dropped by 25% over Christmas and New Year. This year, with Christmas falling on a Thursday, the peak day for donations, SNBTS fears donations could drop even further, by 50%.

Every donation can be used to make up to three blood components, red cells, platelets and fresh frozen plasma. Platelets help blood clot and prevent bleeding and are essential for treating cancer and leukaemia patients. Platelets, which have a shelf life of only 5 days, also face a shortage of donations over the festive period.

Only 9% of people living in Scotland have O negative blood, yet it accounts for 13% of blood issued to hospitals in order to support A&E wards across Scotland.

SNBTS provides blood transfusions for 100,000 patients each year. Three teaspoons of blood can save the life of a premature baby.

Scotland urgently needs more blood donors, so if you've never given before, or haven't given for a while please come along to:

Blood Donor Centre
41 Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9HB

Opening times:

Mon and Fri: 10am-4pm

Tues, Wed and Thurs: 12pm-7.30pm

Sat: 10am-1pm

You can give blood every twelve weeks and you don't need an appointment. Give the gift of life this Christmas – please give blood.

To find out where your nearest local donation session is, call 0845 90 90 999, text 'blood' to 61611, or visit www.scotblood.co.uk

Get your Flu Vaccinations



The flu is a potentially serious virus which can cause a high fever (usually 39°C or above), chills, headache, intense muscle pains, exhaustion, loss of appetite, cough and sometimes a blocked nose and sore throat. It may last a week or more and possible complications include pneumonia.

Flu is commonly spread by the airborne virus as a result of those who are infected coughing and sneezing, but it can also be caught by touching contaminated surfaces.

The UK has a safe and effective vaccination against seasonal flu, which is provided free by the NHS. It's recommended for people at greatest risk of harm from the seasonal flu virus.

The flu vaccination is made from the strain of influenza virus that's expected in the coming winter. Each year this is slightly different so a new vaccine needs to be made every year and you'll need a yearly immunisation to stay protected.

Anyone who is over 65, anyone aged 6 months or over who has lung disease (such as asthma), heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease, diabetes or lowered immunity, anyone undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy treatment, anyone living in a residential or nursing home and people caring for those at risk of flu complications should get the flu vaccine.

Despite popular belief, flu vaccination can't give someone flu as the vaccine doesn't contain the active virus. It's true some people can experience symptoms of a heavy cold at the same time or just after they've had the flu jab. This is simply a coincidence and the symptoms are usually caused by one of the many common cold viruses around in autumn and winter. It usually takes up to two weeks for your body to develop full protection against influenza after the vaccine is given.

Remember, it's still possible to catch heavy colds after vaccination, as the flu jab only protects people from the flu virus, not other viruses.

If you think you're eligible for the flu vaccine, or if you want to discuss this issue more fully, contact your local GP surgery. Information on flu and the flu vaccine is also available from www.infoscotland.com/flu

Are you using too much salt?

Salt Awareness Week runs Monday 2nd – Sunday 8th Feb 2009.

High salt intake is linked to high blood pressure which is the main cause of strokes and a major cause of heart attacks. It is also widely recognised that our high salt diet has other adverse effects, such as osteoporosis, asthma, and is closely linked to cancer of the stomach.

We can survive on as little as 3grams a day, however, the average intake of salt is about 8.6g a day. Adults should eat a maximum of 6 grams a day, which is equivalent to one teaspoon of salt. Experts estimate that if average consumption was cut to 6g a day it would prevent 70,000 heart attacks and strokes a year.

Approximately 75% of the salt we eat is already in the food we buy. The

highest salt containing foods are processed foods like ready meals, baked beans, soups, processed meat, such as ham and bacon, smoked foods, restaurant and takeaway food, some cereals and even bread. It is difficult to avoid eating some of these foods but try to look for low salt alternatives instead.

If you like the taste of salt, there are alternatives you can use.

- Herbs
- Spices - such as curry powder
- Mustard powder
- Lemon or lime juice
- Vinegar
- Red or white wine, cider or beer
- Onions, garlic, shallots, ginger, chillies etc

If you really can't get used to not having salt with some foods then try a salt substitute such as LoSalt which contains potassium instead of sodium.

You will find that after adapting to eating less salt your taste buds will become more sensitive to salt and within 3-4 weeks you will have adjusted and dislike the taste of salty food.

For more information on salt or for promotional information on salt awareness week please see:

www.salt.gov.uk or
www.actiononsalt.org.uk

Latest news on Pandemic Flu

Female members of the University community, who have male partners, will be fully cognisant with the condition of "man flu", in which a set of symptoms which appear to correspond to a heavy cold, transform into "the flu".

As mentioned in another article in this Newsletter, actual seasonal influenza is a much more serious, highly infectious disease, and this has been publicised more effectively through the NHS in recent years.

More serious still is a subject which, over the last few years, has received sporadic media coverage - the potentially inter-related issues of reported incidences of birds which have died from the highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza (H5N1), and the potential for a pandemic influenza outbreak in humans, from whatever source that might arise.

The University has published some information on avian flu on the main

University www site at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/avian-flu>

This information includes a link to the University's Pandemic Flu Contingency Plan, which can be accessed at: http://www.safety.ed.ac.uk/resources/General/pandemic_flu_plan.shtml together with links to further information on occupational and public health aspects.

Supporting this information, much work is going on in connection with preparedness planning at corporate, College and School levels to support the Pandemic Flu Plan. The University wishes to do everything in its power to assist everyone within the University of Edinburgh, in the event of a flu pandemic, and so we have set up a specific channel in MyEd, as a readily

accessible focus for pandemic flu information, for both staff and students of the University.

There are many things to worry about in the modern world – if one of the ones which concerns you is avian/pandemic flu, please do go to the specific MyEd channel and find out further information on risks, and ways to protect yourself.

If you would like any further information on any aspect of this topic, please contact Alastair Reid, Director of Health and Safety (Alastair.Reid@ed.ac.uk; 51 4257)

Edinburgh University ChillOut Society

Swedish Massage, Indian Massage, Reiki Healing, Retreats and more!

Open to Edinburgh University students and staff alike, the ChillOut Society teaches and practices various forms of massage, healing and other relaxing activities.

Our main focus is the Beginner's Massage Course, which, over 6 weeks, teaches you the basics of hands-on Swedish Massage techniques for arms, legs, hands, feet, back, shoulders, head, face and neck. We also teach a day-workshop Indian Head Massage routine which is surprisingly powerful for such a simple and gentle technique, and a more advanced Intermediate Massage course for those who have done the Beginner's Massage Course and want to take things a lot further and learn how the professionals make massage so effective at relieving muscular problems.

For those who prefer something even more subtle and gentle, or want to work on themselves, we teach Reiki, a gentle hands-on healing method which enables you to run healing to recharge yourself or heal others and helps you to get more in touch with your subtler energies and the way things around you affect this.

On ChillOut retreats, we escape the pressures of city life and take a weekend out to stay in Roslin once or twice a year. We bring and eat wonderful food, take walks in the glen and sit in front of the fire, spending more time being rather than doing, and focusing more on making connections with ourselves and others rather than material and intellectual goals; this is the essence of ChillOut Society at it's best!

To find out more about us, log on to our website at www.chillout.org.uk and check out our news or join our mailing list to find out about our upcoming events and courses. The next Beginner's Massage Course will be starting next semester, so make sure you're on the mailing list if you want to hear about the sign-up! If you are interested in finding out more about Reiki, you can read some information and contact the Reiki course organizer through www.chillout.org.uk/reiki

NEW CSE climbing and bouldering facilities!

Reach 'new heights' at the CSE's climbing (The Tower) and bouldering (The Rock) facilities at the Pleasance. The Tower, at 8 metres high with 25 individual route corridors, features a very effective and realistic climbing experience, whilst The Rock, incorporates an expansive 135m² of bouldering surface.



Available to CSE members only (for an additional fee of £3.50 per visit), The Tower and The Rock provide an exciting challenge to both novice and experienced climbers. Novice climbers will be required to complete a 2 hour safe climbing induction session costing £20. However, experienced climbers will be able to sign-in and self-register. Various equipment hires are also available from The Tower reception.

Please visit www.sport.ed.ac.uk for more information.

The CSE is also excited to announce fantastic events and updates going on at your climbing facilities! Here are three to name a few:

New monthly climbing pass

The CSE is excited to announce our new monthly climbing pass starting 1st December! The £25 pass allows CSE members one month (31 days) unrestricted access to BOTH the Tower and the Rock! Passes are available for purchase at the main gym reception.

Climbing Hours:

Weekdays: 11:15 - 21:30

Weekends: 11:15 - 17:30

NEW Climbing Partner Night

New to climbing or to the area? Looking for new climbing partners? Starting 1st December, those looking for a climbing partner, including newly inducted climbers, can come along Monday evenings after 1800 to the Rock (boulder wall) and one of our friendly staff will be on-hand for technical advice and partner pairing. No booking necessary, just come on down and climb – you MAY just have the time of your life!

Climb Everest

The CSE is inviting you to become part of something MASSIVE – our first mission to climb Everest! This mission, should you choose to accept it, is to scale Mount Everest (the world's highest mountain) standing tall at 8848m – which translates to 1106 CSE Tower ascents. To join us in this magnificent feat, simply record your Tower ascents with the climbing staff each time you visit in December.

If we achieve this mission, you will help make CSE history by getting the CSE Director, Jim Aitken, to top the Tower with the final ascent! As if this weren't exciting enough, the person with the most ascents will win a FREE monthly climbing pass!

Hope to CSE you at the top of Everest!

Centre for Sport & Exercise Holiday Opening Times

The CSE is happy to announce we will be OPEN some days over the holiday season. Please see our timetable below for details. The CSE would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

1st - 11th December	Business as usual	
12th December	Reduced gym hours 0730-1030: OPEN - 1430-2130: OPEN	1030-1430: GYM & POOL CLOSED *NO lunchtime POOL session
13th - 21st December	Business as usual	
22nd December:	Reduced gym hours 0730-1730	*NO evening POOL session
23rd - 28th December	CLOSED	
29th & 30th December	Reduced gym hours 0900-1730	*Pool CLOSED *FASIC open 30th December AM only
31st December - 2nd Jan:	CLOSED	
3rd & 4th January:	Regular gym hours	*Pool CLOSED
5th January onward	Business as usual	*Please note: FASIC, Firbush, Peffermill, and St. Leonard's Land/Pool are CLOSED 12th December 1100-1430 AND 23rd December - 4th January.

Dates for Your Diary!

Date for your diaries (or potential for organising activity in your individual areas);

January 2009

- 19-23 - Food Allergy and Intolerance Week - Allergy UK
- 19-23 - Cancertalk Week - Macmillan Cancer Support
- 26-31 - Be Loud! Be Clear! - Beating Bowel Cancer

February 2009

- 1-28 - National Heart Month – Go Red for Heart - British Heart Foundation
- 6 - Stress Down Day - The Samaritans
- 2-8 - Salt Awareness Week

March 2009

- 1-31 - Great Daffodil Appeal - Marie Curie Cancer Care
- 1-31 - Prostate Cancer Awareness Month - Prostate Cancer Charity
- 1-31 - Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month - Ovarian Cancer Action

April 2009

- 1-30 - Bowel Cancer Awareness Month - Bowel Cancer UK
- 1-30 - International IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) Awareness Month
- 12-18 - Mental Health Action Week - Mental Health Foundation

May 2009

- 4-10 - Deaf Awareness Week - UK Council on Deafness
- 11-17 - Sun Awareness Week - British Association of Dermatologists
- 15 - Fruity Friday - World Cancer Research Fund
- 17-23 - National Epilepsy Week - for more information - Epilepsy Action
- 17 May-16 June - National Smile Month - British Dental Health Foundation

For more information on these and other events please see the individual organisations websites or see:

<http://www.equip.nhs.uk/staffwm/healthevents.html>

Happy, Safe and Healthy Festive season to all!

Access to Resources

Anyone without access to the www can obtain details on any of the above information from the Health & Safety Department.

To contact Karen Darling, Deputy Director of the Health and Safety Department please email Karen.Darling@ed.ac.uk or phone on 651 4258.

Acknowledgements

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