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SUNY FREDONIA

# Spring 2006 EAP Newsletter

Greetings from the EAP Committee! In this issue of the news-letter, we focus on positive benefits of gardening, and how to garden safely; seasonal allergies; and heat exhaustion and heat stroke. We also want to thank the SUNY Fredonia community for their support of the EAP Wellness Fair. Best wishes to you for a safe and fun spring and

## **Gardening for Good Health**

Gardening is a great form of exercise for the body, providing three types of physical activity - endurance, flexibility and strength. It reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and cholesterol levels, increases bone density, relieves tension in muscles, and burns calories! Gardening is great for the mind and spirit too, helping people heal emotionally and stimulating all the senses. Working in the garden can keep our mind off our worries, enhance the environment, and make us feel peaceful and close to the Earth. On top of ALL those great reasons to garden, you will also enjoy the results of your labors!

Tips to make gardening safe and enjoyable...

Wear a large hat.

Use sunscreen.

Use a portable padded surface to kneel on.

Wear gloves.

Avoid gardening during the hottest part of the day.

Stay hydrated.

Prepare your muscles for bending and lifting by doing a few stretches.

Work in moderation – don't overexert yourself.

Move around and shake out muscles frequently.

Bend from your knees and keep your back straight, being careful not to twist.

## **EAP Wellness Fair 2006**

This year's Wellness Fair had 59 vendors/participants taking advantage of the opportunity to introduce their services/products to approximately 300 SUNY faculty, staff, students, and community members. "Goody bags" containing water, fruit, pens, pencils, "Things to Do List" notepads, and stress balls were distributed to the first 226 visitors. Many local businesses donated a variety of items. We give our thanks to: **AAA Western and Central NY, Carriage House, Darwin's Health Center, Tail Waggers Boutique, Troyer Farms, Faculty Student Association, Wal-Mart, Cliffstar, Tina's Hallmark, Pepsi, Upper Crust, Express Printing, Brigiotta's, Wing City Grill, and Martin's.**

## Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke



Heat exhaustion is a very serious condition that typically results from heavy exercise in a warm or humid place. During heat exhaustion, sweat does not evaporate properly, which keeps the body from cooling itself. Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist, pale, flushed, or red skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea, or vomiting; dizziness;

and exhaustion. Heat exhaustion can progress into heat stroke, in which the body's temperature can raise so high that brain damage or even death can occur. Signs of heat stroke include hot, red, dry skin, changes in consciousness, rapid or weak pulse, and rapid and shallow breathing.

Treating heat exhaustion and heat stroke as quickly as possible is extremely important. For heat exhaustion, it is very important to move the person to a cool place, in a comfortable position. If the

person is fully awake, give him/her half a glass of water every 15 minutes. Do not allow him/her to drink too quickly. Call 911 if the person's condition does not improve. If someone is suffering from heat stroke, call 911 right away! Move the person to a cool place and wrap his/her body in wet sheets and fan him/her until help arrives.

During warm weather, one should never leave pets in the car as the temperature can rapidly increase and cause heat stroke or even death. To make sure that pets stay safe in the warmer weather keep them in the shade and always offer a supply of clean cool water.

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## Are You Suffering From the Curse of Spring?

Itchy, watery eyes? Runny nose? Sneezing a lot? You are not alone. An estimate by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology states that 35.9 million Americans suffer to some degree from these classic symptoms of seasonal allergies. Now that spring has arrived, there is much more pollen in the air. You may first think that you just have a common cold. However, there are differences between allergy and cold symptoms. A cold will usually run its course in 7-10 days, with a thick nasal discharge. Allergies can linger for several weeks or even longer, with the nasal discharge being thin and clear. Knowing the difference is important in determining proper treatment.

Aside from staying away from the source of allergens (i.e., staying

indoors and keeping windows shut), antihistamines may be used to decrease symptoms. However, there can be negative side effects when taking antihistamines, including drowsiness. "Non-drowsy" versions can cause restlessness and insomnia. Products containing pseudoephedrine are now restricted in some states; in these states, one must request them from the pharmacist on duty. In more severe instances of allergies or adverse reactions to antihistamines, it would be best to contact a family doctor. For those who prefer herbal remedies, the stinging nettle herb might be worth a try.

*The Following Are A Few Preventive Measures To Help Ease Springtime Allergy Symptoms*



- Use a saline nasal mist to moisturize the nasal passages and clear them of airborne allergens before you breathe them in.
- Stay inside between 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on hot, dry, windy days, when pollen counts are highest.
- If you have been exposed to outdoor pollens, change your clothes, wash your hair and shower as soon as possible.
- Use your clothes dryer rather than hanging them outdoors.
- When possible, avoid mowing and being around freshly mowed lawns, and areas surrounded by flowers and trees.