

E.ON UK

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eon-uk.com

Health matters

Your guide to staying healthy at work



e-on

Your details

Your name

GP's name

You manager's name

GP's Number

Telephone number for First Aid

Dentist's name

Dentist's number

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Your health at work

Within E.ON our employees are our most valuable asset, whether permanent staff or our contracted colleagues, your health and wellbeing is important to us.

You've heard the term: Health and Safety, and know that working on construction sites or with electricity can be dangerous. What about the health issues? What does the HEALTH in Health and Safety mean to you?

How can you protect yourself?

You can protect yourself by being aware of the health hazards that you may come across in your work activities and adhering to the controls in place.

Some examples of health hazards you may encounter on E.ON sites are:	
Hazard	Health concern
Manual Handling operations	Musculo skeletal injuries
Respiratory sensitizers	Respiratory Disease
Skin sensitizers	Skin Disease
Noise	Noise induced hearing loss
Vibration	Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome
Hot working Environments	Heat Stress/Exhaustion

Get it wrong today and you could suffer the consequences tomorrow and potentially for the rest of your life! Please read on for more information.

Did you know in 2007/2008?

- 2.1 million People in the UK were suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their current or past work.
- 34 million days were lost overall (1.4 days per worker), 28 million due to work-related ill health and 6 million due to workplace injury.

You and your skin

Work related skin complaints can be caused by exposure to substances, certain activities or the environment.

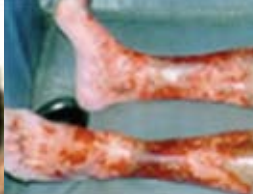
The main skin disorders are:



Contact Dermatitis
(irritant)



Allergic contact
Dermatitis



Burns & trauma
(cement burn)



Cancer
(melanoma)

Do you suffer from, or have you had any of the following symptoms which may have occurred on your hands, fingers or any other part of your skin that is exposed at work:

- Redness or swelling.
- Flaking or scaling of the skin.
- Did any of these problems occur more than once?
- Have you ever had time off work with skin problems?
- Cracking and/or blistering of the skin
- Did any of the above last more than one week?

Seek medical advice if you answered yes to any of the above.

What can I do?

Avoid direct contact between unprotected hands and substances.

Protect the skin.

- Wear suitable personal protective equipment such as gloves.
- Use mild skin cleaning cream, wash hands before eating and drinking, and before wearing gloves.
- Wash any contamination from skin promptly and dry skin thoroughly.
- Protect the skin by moisturizing as often as possible and particularly at the end of the day - this replaces the natural oils that help keep the skin's protective barrier working properly. Use suitable pre-work creams.

Check hands regularly for the first signs of itchy, dry or red skin: When skin problems are spotted early, they can be treated, which can stop them from getting worse.



Breathe easy

Did you know approximately 7,000 people a year suffer from asthma caused or made worse by their work? The main causes include paint vapour, wood dust and solder fumes.

Asthma - What is it?

Asthma is a serious health problem. Symptoms include severe shortness of breath that can stop you from doing the simplest tasks. Imagine not being able to carry your shopping or walk up the stairs or even play with your children

Occupational asthma

Occupational asthma is an allergic reaction that can occur in some people when they are exposed to substances, for example wood dust, soldering flux, some glues, resins in the workplace. These substances are called 'respiratory sensitizers'. Not everyone who becomes sensitised goes on to get asthma. But once the lungs become hypersensitive, further exposure to the substance, even at quite low levels, may trigger an attack.

The symptoms can develop right after exposure to a workplace substance. But sometimes symptoms appear several hours later, possibly at night. This can make any link with workplace activities unclear.



What can I do?

There are a number of things you can do to reduce your risk. These include:

- Understanding the substances and materials that you are working with - read the health and safety data sheets.
- Be aware of the early symptoms of sensitisation.
- Keep your workplace equipment, clothing and masks (if applicable) clean and free from dust.
- Ensure you use all control measures provided e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE), local exhaust ventilation etc.
- Store your PPE correctly so that they do not become contaminated.
- Report any defect of the control measures and PPE to your manager.
- Give up smoking - this can make symptoms worse.

Do you or have you ever had any of the following? (Do not include isolated colds, sore throats or flu)

- Recurring soreness of or watering of eyes.
- Recurring blocked or running nose.
- Bouts of coughing.
- Any other persistent chest problems.
- Wheezing.
- Breathlessness.
- Chest tightness.

If you answer yes to any of the above seek further medical advice

Pardon?

Noise induced hearing loss is the most common occupational health hazard there is, and it is incurable. This section aims to highlight some tips on how you can protect your hearing at home and at work.

One of the major problems with hearing loss is that it gradually occurs over time, so you may not be aware it is happening. At work your employer is responsible for carrying out noise assessments and ensuring that the correct controls including Personal Protective Equipment are provided. If your employer provides you with hearing protection then you should use it and ensure it is well maintained.

In society today however we are quite often exposed to high levels of noise in our hobbies or at home. A simple test you can do at home or at work to assess if you are at risk of damaging your hearing is: If you are standing approximately one metre away from someone and you have to shout to be heard then the noise level is high and you should consider wearing hearing protection or where possible control the noise levels by eliminating the noise.

What are the warning signs?

- Ringing in your ears.
- Difficulty hearing sounds e.g. other people talking.
- Difficulties locating which direction noises are coming from.
- Problems hearing certain letters / words / tones.

Self check questionnaire

- Do you have any trouble hearing the telephone or doorbells?
- Do any of your family or friends complain that you have the television or Radio on too loud?
- Do you have difficulty hearing conversation against a noisy background?
- Do you suffer from a permanent? Constant ringing in your ears?

If you answer yes to any of the above questions seek further medical advice



Did you know?

In 2007/08 an estimated 21 000 individuals who worked in the last 12 months were suffering hearing problems which they believed to be work-related, according to the Labour Force Survey.

A Medical Research Council survey in 1997-98 gave a prevalence estimate of 509 000 people in Great Britain suffering from hearing difficulties as a result of exposure to noise at work.

Feeling the vibration?

Hand Arm Vibration occurs when vibration is transmitted from work processes into workers hands. Regular and frequent exposure to hand arm vibration can lead to permanent health effects such as Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS).



When am I at risk?

If you regularly use hand held power tools e.g. drills, angle grinders, concrete breakers etc. The risks increase when:

- You use the equipment for a long time.
- You get cold or wet when using the equipment.
- You have to grip the tools tightly.
- It is awkward to use the tools.

How can I protect myself?

- Use any control measures your employer has put in place.
- Be aware of the risks associated with vibrating tools.
- You can protect yourself by learning to recognise early the signs and symptoms of HAVS.
- Report symptoms & seek medical advice.

Self check questionnaire

- Do you have any numbness or tingling in your fingers?
- Do you wake at night with pain, tingling, or numbness in your hands or wrists?
- Have any of your fingers gone white on cold exposure?
- Are you suffering from any loss of grip strength in your hands?
- Do you feel that the sensation of touch in any of your fingers isn't what it use to be?
- Is there a reduction in how you can do fiddly and fine tasks because your fingers don't work like they use to?

If you answered yes to any of the above seek further medical advice

Are you making healthy choices?

Within E.ON our employees are our most valuable asset, whether permanent staff or our contracted colleagues, your health and well-being is important to us.

Many of us have a busy lifestyle and do not take the time to stop and consider our health, exercise regularly or even visit the GP and ask for advice when we perhaps should.

This booklet recognises the challenges of managing your health whilst at home and work. Providing you with some tips on lifestyle changes you can make with little effort and which may have a big impact on your general health.

How many of the boxes can you tick?

- I eat a healthy diet
- I take regular exercise
- I manage pressure well
- I rarely drink alcohol or binge drink
- I do not smoke
- I have a healthy lifestyle
- I do not suffer from any back or musculo skeletal problems

Many of us will not be able to tick all of the above and for those of us who live and work away from home this is even less likely.

The following pages provide you with some information and advice on the key health issues mentioned above, along with some information on health at work. For further information please contact:

Eat your way to health

A well balanced diet improves general health by helping to maintain a healthy weight, lowering cholesterol levels, keeping blood pressure levels within normal limits, reducing the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

Obesity in the UK is an ever increasing problem affecting all age ranges, with heart disease being the number one health concern in the UK.

Here are some tips to help you start improving your diet and health;

- Try to cut your salt intake e.g. by either not adding salt to your meals or using low salt.
- Reduce your saturated fat intake e.g. by grilling instead of frying food, switching from full fat to skimmed or semi skimmed milk.
- Eat 5 portions of fruit and veg a day.
- Keep hydrated - drink water throughout the day.
- Eat fish especially the oily types such as mackerel or sardines these are loaded with special oils which protect your heart.
- Carbohydrates such as wholemeal bread and pasta all provide energy for the working man.

Did you know?

- When men have food cravings, they tend to crave fat and salt. When women crave food, they tend to prefer chocolate.
- The average human body contains enough water to fill a 38 litre/10 gallon tank.



Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day!

This does not have to be difficult, for example to hit 5 or 6 a day;

- Put a handful of raisins on your cereals in the morning.
- Drink a glass of orange juice.
- Eat an apple and or a banana instead of the chocolate bar.
- Have a vegetable stir fry.
- Add mushrooms or peas into your curry.
- Have an extra portion of veg with your lunch.



Just Eat More
(fruit & veg)

Useful Contacts

5 a day

www.5aday.nhs.uk.

T:0207 210 4850

British Heart Foundation

www.bhf.org.uk.

T:08450708070

Diabetes UK

www.diabetes.org.uk.

T:08451202960

Get up and get moving!

Improving your diet alone will not improve your general health; exercise and fitness also are a factor. We should all take at least 30 minutes of physical exercise on most days of the week.

Many jobs require you to carry out a significant amount of physical activity, but if you have a more sedentary job, there are many simple things you can do which make exercise part of your normal working day.

Tips to increase your daily exercise:

1. Walk or bike to work.
2. Take the stairs instead of lifts.
3. Go for a walk at lunch or break times.
4. Join a sports team after work.
5. Enrol in fitness challenges offered in the workplace e.g. pedometer challenges.
6. After work, don't just sit in front of the TV! Walk the dog, play with your children, or take a walk to the local shop.
7. Do some DIY.



Did you know?

- If everyone walked for at least 30 mins, 5 days a week, 37% of heart attacks could be prevented.
- Men who increase their activity level over a five year period cut their chances of dying early by almost half.
- People who are obese at 40 can lose up to seven years off their life.

Useful Contacts

Weight Concern

02076796639

www.weightconcern.org.uk

Sport England

02072731551

www.sportengland.org

My blood pressure

Many of us worry about our Blood Pressure but don't necessarily know what this means or how to influence it.

Blood pressure can be defined as the pressure of the blood flowing through your arteries - the tubes that take blood away from your heart to the rest of your body.

High blood pressure (hypertension)

- High blood pressure often causes no symptoms or immediate problems, but it is a major risk factor for developing serious conditions, such as a stroke or heart disease.
- If you suffer high blood pressure, your heart has to work harder to pump blood around your body. Over time, this can weaken it and the increased pressure can damage the walls of your arteries, which can result in a blockage or cause the artery to split. Both of these situations can result in a stroke.



How can I maintain a good Blood Pressure?

1. Take regular exercise such as a brisk walk, cycling or dancing.
2. Eat less salt (try a salt substitute).
3. Eat 5 fruit and vegetables a day.
4. Reduce your alcohol intake.
5. Try and maintain a healthy weight.

Did you know?

- High blood pressure is common, with 40% of adults in England having the condition.
- The number of people who have high blood pressure increases with age.
- In 95% of cases, there is no single identifiable reason for a raise in blood pressure. However, all available evidence shows that your lifestyle plays a significant role in regulating your blood pressure.
- Nearly a third of people with high blood pressure are not being treated.

Useful Contacts

British Heart Foundation
www.bhf.org.uk
 08450708070

Time to quit?

Giving up smoking may take a lot more effort than some of the health tips already provided but it is possibly one of the changes in lifestyle which will have the most impact on your health.

The more researchers look at the effect of smoking on health, the more we know that cigarettes are the single greatest killer in our society. Interested in giving up?



Tips on ways to give up smoking

1. Choose a stress free day to stop and tell your family and work mate's. They will support you.
2. Try and get someone to give up with you. You can support each other.
3. Clear your house, car, pockets etc of all cigarettes, tobacco, papers or matches.
4. Take it one day at a time.
5. Chew on alternative foods e.g. a carrot- it will help with your five a day but also give you something to do with your mouth and hands.
6. Keep all the money you saved separately - then treat yourself.
7. Keep busy. Being physically active will help reduce cravings.
8. Consider nicotine replacement therapies.

Did you know?

Facts about stopping smoking

- After 20 minutes - your pulse and blood pressure return to normal.
- After 24hrs - carbon monoxide is eliminated from body, lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris.
- After 48hrs - there is no nicotine in the body. Ability to taste and smell is greatly improved.
- 3-9 months - coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve as lung function is increased by up to 10%.
- 5yrs - risk of heart attack falls to half that of a smoker.
- 10yrs - risk of lung cancer falls to half that of a smoker. Risk of heart attack falls to the same as someone who has never smoked.
- The best bit is that you can save money if you smoke 20 a day after one month you could have saved £167.29!

Useful Contacts

NHS Smoking helpline

08001690169

Quit

0800002200

www.quit.org.uk

To binge or not to binge?

Having a drink or two with your work mates after work isn't going to play havoc with your health, provided you pay attention to the Government's guidelines on suggested intake.

Fairly recently we have even found out that moderate drinking for men and women over 40 can actually help prevent heart disease. Problems arise however when we drink too much.



How much is too much?

The Government's daily guideline is 2-3 units for women and 3-4 for men. One unit is equivalent to 8g of alcohol. That's about what you get in half a pint of a weak (4%) lager. A whole pint of strong lager (5%) or cider contains three units. Two small (125ml) glasses of wine (12%) are another three units.

How can I reduce the risk?

- Drink plenty of water before, during and after the pub. If you're thirsty, you'll tend to drink more alcohol.
- Drink after a meal rather than before- you won't feel like drinking so much.
- Cut down the strength of your drinks e.g. switch from a strong lager to a normal lager.
- Try to have at least one alcohol free day each week.

A heavy night out?

People underestimate just how long alcohol stays in the body after a night out and you may still be over the legal limit for driving the next day. 12 units will take 12 hours to be completely flushed out of your system. If you go to bed having had a heavy night at 3am, you are unlikely to be sober enough to drive or safely operate machinery the next day

Did you know?

- Alcohol is estimated to be responsible for 33,000 deaths in the UK each year
- The UK has one of the highest rates of binge drinking in Europe.
- Alcohol isn't a stimulant, it's a depressant.

Useful Contacts

Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholics-anonymous.co.uk
0845 769 7555

Al Anon Family Groups

www.al-anonuk.org.uk
0207 403 0888

Drinkline

www.wrecked.co.uk
0800 917 8282

Drinkaware

www.drinkaware.co.uk
0207 307 7450

Drugs: just say "no".

The subject of drug misuse is important to all of us, drugs can impair judgement, impact relationships at work and at home and affect our ability to work. This can have particular consequences in Safety Critical environments.



What is Drug Misuse?

Drug misuse is when you take illegal drugs, or when you take medicines in a way not recommended by your GP or the manufacturer. Examples of drugs that are commonly misused include:

- illegal drugs.
- alcohol.
- tobacco.
- prescribed medicines including painkillers, sleeping tablets and cold remedies.
- Glues, aerosols, gases and solvents.

What are the signs of drug misuse?

Signs and symptoms of drug misuse may include:

- continually increasing the dose of drugs to achieve the same effect.
- a feeling of dependency on drugs, or a fear of stopping using drugs.
- withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking the drug for a short time.
- sudden mood changes.
- a negative or changed outlook on life.
- loss of motivation.
- poor performance at work.
- problems with personal relationships.
- borrowing or stealing money from friends and family.
- Being secretive about activities and actions.

Once you recognise that you have a drug problem, you should see your GP. They can give you advice, support and refer you for specialist treatment. Be open with your GP about your drug use, and your reasons for wanting to give it up. You may also want to tell close family and friends about your decision, and ask them for their support.

Where can I go for help or further advice?

The National Drugs Helpline is a free and confidential telephone helpline, offering information about drugs and drug abuse. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Tel. 0800 77 66 00.

Prescription Medicines

If you are taking prescription medication, you should always follow the manufacturer's advice about driving (you can find this in the leaflet enclosed with the pack). Never drive or operate heavy machinery after taking medication where the manufacturer advises against it. Ask your GP if you're not sure.

Useful Contacts

Narcotics Anonymous

www.ukna.org
0207 730 0009

Drugscope

www.drugscope.org.uk
0870 7743 682

Cocaine Anonymous

www.cauk.org.uk
0207 284 1123

Safer sex

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) can infect anyone - young, old, straight, gay, in a long-term relationship or with a casual partner. Symptoms aren't always obvious and don't always show up immediately. It is important that you practice safer sex by using a condom.



Did you know?

In the UK, STIs have been rising continually since the 1990s. Between 2004 and 2005, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) reported a 3% increase in the number of diagnosed STIs, with a total of 790,387 cases. The biggest increase was in the number of confirmed diagnoses of syphilis which rose by a massive 23%, to a total of 2,807 cases. There were also increases in positive diagnoses of Chlamydia, genital warts, and herpes.

Preventing STIs

Practising safe sex is the most effective way of preventing STIs. The male condom is the most effective method. You can never be 100% sure that a prospective sexual partner does not have an STI, and the more sexual partners that you have, the higher the risk of contracting an STI.

What are the symptoms of an STI?

- an unusual discharge from the vagina, or penis.
- a burning sensation when urinating.
- pain during sex.
- Itching, rashes, or lumps, around the genitals.

Sometimes the symptoms of a STI may not appear until months after you become infected, and some STIs have no symptoms at all. Even without symptoms, an STI may be damaging your reproductive system. You may also be passing it on to your sexual partners.

Where can I go for further advice or testing?

- Most STIs are treatable. If you think that you may have a STI, it is very important that you are tested at your GP's surgery, or a local genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic.
- Call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 to locate your closest GUM clinic. Confidentiality is respected. For further information contact the telephone number on the front of this book.

Useful Contacts

NHS Direct

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
0845 46 47

Men's health forum

www.malehealth.co.uk

Suffering with back pain?

While back pain may not necessarily be caused by your job, back pain can have a profound effect on your ability to do your job. Furthermore back pain also poses a challenge for many organisations since back pain is the second most common cause for work absence.



Do's and Don'ts that will help you deal with back pain and let you get on with your life.

Do's

- Do stay as active as usual, if possible. But see your doctor if you are worried about the back pain or if the pain persists or suddenly gets worse.
- Do take simple pain relief to help with the pain.
- Do speak to your employer and discuss what can be done to help you stay at work.
- Do find out about back pain. A summary of good advice can be found in guidance booklets like The Back Book.
- Speak to your manager regarding manual handling training

Don'ts

- Don't take to your bed and wait for the pain to go away. The sooner you get back to normal activity the better.
- Don't avoid activity simply as a way of avoiding the pain - hurt does not always mean harm.

Top tips for a healthy back

1. Use mechanical handling methods instead of manual handling if possible e.g. forklifts/pallet trucks etc.
2. Don't lift loads above shoulder height or in cramped areas
3. Always bend your knees and your hips, not your back.
4. Never twist and bend at the same time.
5. Always lift and carry objects close to your body.
6. Exercise your back regularly. Walking, swimming (especially back stroke) are all excellent ways to strengthen your back muscles.
7. Quit smoking. It is thought that smoking reduces the blood supply to the discs between the vertebrae and this may lead to degeneration of these discs.
8. Maintain a healthy weight.

Did you know?

Back pain affects more than one million in the UK. Back pain affects all industries, not just a few high risk sectors. In 2003/4 an estimated 4.9 million working days were lost due to back pain caused or made worse by work.

Useful Contacts

Backcare

08702407972

www.backcare.org

Time for bed?

Sleep problems can cause more than just sleepiness - a lack of quality sleep can cause accidents, affect your relationships, physical and mental health.



What causes Insomnia? There is a long list of causes but just to name a few:

- Stress.
- Anxiety.
- Depression.
- Medication.
- Medical conditions e.g. if you are in pain.
- Stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol.
- Change in sleeping environment.
- Learned Insomnia - worrying about sleep.
- Eating late at night.
- Irregular sleep patterns - shift and night workers.

If you're having problems sleeping more than three times a week for a month's time, seek medical advice. You could have a sleep disorder, such as obstructive sleep apnoea or restless legs syndrome. Identifying and treating the cause of your sleep disturbance can help get you back on the road to a good night's sleep.

Did You Know?

Most adults need seven to eight hours sleep a night. More than one-third of adults have insomnia at some time, while 10 to 15 percent report long-term (chronic) insomnia.

10 tips for better sleeping:

1. Stick to as schedule. Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day, even on the weekends.
2. Don't eat or drink large amounts before going to bed
3. Avoid nicotine, caffeine and alcohol in the evening.
4. Exercise regularly but not within 3 hours of bedtime
5. Make your bedroom cool, dark, quiet and comfortable.
6. Sleep at night. Avoid naps during the day.
7. Choose a comfortable mattress and pillow
8. Start a relaxing bedtime routine
9. Go to bed when you're tired and turn out the lights. If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, get up and do something else.
10. Sleeping tablets are a last resort, seek advice from your GP before taking these.

Coping with stress

What do we mean when we talk about stress?

Pressure at home or work can be good for us as it can motivate us to succeed at projects etc, but if the pressure becomes excessive or prolonged this may have a negative impact on your health.



Common symptoms of stress;

- Eating more or eating less than normal.
- Mood swings.
- Poor concentration.
- Feeling tense or anxious.
- Low self-esteem.
- Not sleeping properly.
- Tiredness.
- Poor memory or forgetfulness.
- Excessive drinking and/ or drug use.

Five tips to help you manage stress:

1. Take a time out from a stressful situation – a few minutes or longer if needed to clear your mind.
2. Make sure you take your holidays.
3. Exercise.
4. Take time to plan the day.
5. Talk - about stress to your friends, family, colleagues or Manager as they may help you see things in a different light and find a way forward.

Did you know?

- 5 million people of working age have a common mental health disorder, such as stress, depression anxiety, addiction etc. over 40% of time off work is due to mental ill health.
- At any one time one worker in six will be experiencing depression, anxiety or problems relating to stress.
- In 2007/08 an estimated 442 000 individuals in Britain, who worked in the last year, believed that they were experiencing work-related stress at a level that was making them ill, according to the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Useful Contacts

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.nacab.org.uk

Relate

www.relate.org.uk

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org
08457 90 90 90

Victim Support

www.victimsupport.com

