



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS NORTH FLORIDA CHAPTER

MAY 2017 NEWSLETTER

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Identifying and Controlling the Hazards of Blue Light

Last month we talked about blue light, what it is, and how it can affect you and your eyes. This month, we'll take the blue light discussion one step further. We'll talk about how to avoid blue light exposure.

Late last year, the American Optometric

Association (AOA) released its 2016 American Eye-Q® survey, which found that the average American spends at least 7 hours per day looking at an assortment of screens to include phones, tablets, computers, and flat-screen televisions. For Millennials, unfortunately, this figure is even higher; the survey found that they spend an average of 9 hours per day in front of some type of screen. So, you may ask, how do extended hours in front of a screen affect our eyes? Well, if we were in the sixties and that screen was an Etch A Sketch, it would not be so problematic. But as you know, times have changed.

The short answer to the aforementioned question is that our eyes are being affected negatively by blue light. Digital device screens emit high concentrations of blue, high-energy visible light; and this can lead to an

assortment of symptoms. So, please read on to learn more.

Many sources of artificial light, including fluorescent bulbs, LEDs, and the screens of many electronic devices, are skewed toward the high-energy, blue end of the visible spectrum. Acute overexposure to blue light can disrupt levels of the hormone melatonin, making it harder to fall asleep and reducing the amount of time spent in REM sleep. It can also cause digital eye strain (sometimes called computer vision syndrome).

Symptoms of this syndrome include: dry eyes, eye irritation in the form of burning and stinging, sleep challenges, blurred vision, headaches, and neck and shoulder pain.

Chronic overexposure to blue light can cause permanent damage to the retina and is believed to contribute to the



development of age-related macular degeneration, which is the most common cause of blindness in individuals over the age of 55.

In order to protect their eyes, people should monitor their digital screen usage at home and work. And there are many more things that can be done. For example:

- Go dark. As the sun goes down, dim the screens on your devices. Use lower-wattage bulbs in your bedroom, and use dimmer switches to reduce light levels at night. Turn digital devices off at least 1 hour before going to bed to reduce the impact of blue light on melatonin.
- Follow the 20-20-20 rule. For every 20 minutes you spend looking at a device or computer screen, take a 20-second break and focus on something that is 20 feet away. And be aware that there are timer programs available that will prompt you when it's time to take a break. Or

simply go old school and set a timer.

- Keep your distance. Rather than bringing the screen closer to your eyes to see small print and details, use the zoom feature on your device.
- Reduce the amount of glare on screens by positioning screens so that they are indirectly rather than directly lit. You can do this by adjusting the device settings or by putting a glare filter on your monitor to decrease the amount of blue light.
- Use a software filter. They are available and can reduce the amount of blue light coming from your screen. Some tablets now come with preinstalled blue light filters that can be scheduled to change the spectrum of the screen lighting at specific times of day.
- Wear sunglasses. Yellow glasses that block blue wavelengths are available for when you are inside of a building. And wearing a

high-quality pair of traditional sunglasses outdoors, even on cloudy days, can reduce your exposure to the blue portion of natural light.

So, at the end of the day, many of the devices that were designed to enhance our lives and improve productivity may have given us more than we bargained for. They certainly have many positive attributes; but if we don't monitor ourselves and our usage of these devices, the negative effects can outweigh the positive attributes of the devices.

Adapted from an article written by Jennifer Busick.

EHS Daily Advisor

Online Edition

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[EHS Daily Advisor](#)

Expired EpiPens May Still Help Save a Life: But Allergy Experts Advise not Counting on Older Devices if You Can Replace Them

EpiPens, the devices that are used to rescue people during a severe allergic



reaction, can remain effective for years after their expiration date, a new study has reported.

An evaluation of almost 40 expired, unused EpiPens brought in by patients revealed that all of the devices that were tested contained more than 80 percent of their initial dose of epinephrine. And this was true even as long as four years beyond the device's expiration date, said study lead researcher F. Lee Cantrell, director of the California Poison Control System - San Diego Division.

Cantrell went on to say that people who are unable to replace an old EpiPen due to pharmacy shortages should hold onto it past expiration. This is because the device could still contain a lifesaving dose. "There's still a dose that would be therapeutic in there," he said. "If this is all you have, this is better than nothing."

Cantrell still recommends that people replace their expired EpiPens if fresh ones are available, as a

matter of safety. "If it's me, if I'm highly allergic to a bee sting, I want something that I know is going to save my life," Cantrell said. "At the same time, if an expired EpiPen is all that I have, I would use it."

Moreover, Cantrell believes that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Mylan, the maker of the EpiPen, should reassess the expiration date set for EpiPens to see if it can be extended. Expiration dates, the FDA has said, are based on studies conducted during a drug's evaluation process that test its stability in both ideal and poor storage conditions. After a drug has gained approval, companies are required to continue these studies. Then, they can request an extension of the expiration date if the data supports doing so.

Mylan said in a statement that its products carry expiration dates that reflect the final day "that a product has been determined to be safe and effective when stored under the conditions stated in the package

insert." "Given the life-threatening nature of anaphylaxis, patients are encouraged to refill their EpiPen Auto-Injector upon expiration, approximately every 12 to 18 months," the company's statement reads. "Mylan also continues to invest in product improvements, such as a formulation with a longer shelf life."

Cantrell and his colleagues conducted their study after a steep hike in the price of EpiPens caused a consumer rush at pharmacies. Mylan obtained the rights to sell the EpiPen in 2007, and has since increased the list price of the auto-injector from \$94 to over \$600, according to news reports. People with extreme allergies keep EpiPens on hand to prevent a potentially fatal allergic reaction.

For the trial, a two week period was set up where patients at a community clinic in San Diego were asked to bring in unused, expired EpiPens so they could be examined, the



researchers said. The team ended up with 31 EpiPens and 9 EpiPen Jrs.

None of the pens that were brought in showed discoloration, which is a sign that the pen has gone bad and it should not be used, Cantrell said. Analysis of the pens revealed that all of them still retained most of their potency. The lowest level of epinephrine, 81 percent, was found in an EpiPen Jr.; it was 30 months past its expiration date. Moreover, approximately 65 percent of the EpiPens and 56 percent of the EpiPen Jrs. contained at least 90 percent of their initial epinephrine dose, the researchers concluded.

Despite these findings, allergist Dr. Andrew Murphy said patients should not hold off replacing their injector to save money. "The drug is labeled to be good to a certain date," said Murphy, who practices in Downingtown, Pa. "That's what I know as a prescribing physician, that the FDA and the pharmaceutical company have guaranteed

that. "Having said that, if someone is at home and they're having a reaction and the only thing they have available is an expired epinephrine injector, as long as it's not yellow or cloudy or has something floating in there, go ahead and use it," Murphy continued.

A larger study is needed to confirm what this new paper reports, Murphy said, but the findings do indicate that the FDA should re-evaluate how long the pens are viable. However, individuals need to keep in mind that the epinephrine in the injectors can degrade more quickly if they're poorly stored, Murphy said. For example, a pen kept in a car can be subjected to high heat in the summer and freezing cold in the winter, which would affect the stability of the drug. Unfortunately, "The reality is, most people don't store their pens under ideal circumstances," Murphy said.

Adapted from an article written by Dennis Thomas of *HealthDay Reporter*.

WebMD

May 9, 2017

[WebMD Health](#)

OSHA NEWS

Free Webinars on Preventing Heat Stress Scheduled for May and June

With summer fast approaching, the North Carolina Dept. of Labor is offering a series of free 90-minute webinars on the hazards of heat stress in construction and general industry. Topics to be discussed include key definitions, causal factors, heat disorders, health effects, prevention, control, engineering controls, personal protective equipment, administrative controls, acclimatization, re-acclimating, work monitoring and training. At the end of the course, students should have a basic understanding of methods to prevent or minimize exposure to



excessive heat in order to prevent heat stress. In addition, students will be able to recognize symptoms of heat stress along with tips on how to treat heat stress victims. The first webinar will be held on May 22, and six additional webinars are set for May and June. For more information or to register, see [the webpage](#). In addition to heat stress, the North Carolina Dept. of Labor offers webinars on many topics to include confined space entry, LOTO, machine guarding, respirable crystalline silica, recordkeeping, welding and cutting, etc.

OSHA Newsletter

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osha.news@subscriptions.dol.gov

Job Market Links

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- Steve Brown – SPY Chair
- Tom Drygas – Program Chair
- Vernon Adams – Social Media Chair

Local Chapter Meeting Schedule

EverBank Field Tour

The tour will include a discussion of fall protection, construction safety, and visitor safety.

Date/Time:

May 24, 2017
11:30 a.m. - Meeting and Officer Elections
12 Noon - Technical Session

Location:

EverBank Field
1 EverBank Field Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Meeting point is the west side of the stadium, at the Jaguar Statue.

Cost: Free

Please RSVP to Steve Wilson for all meetings at:
steven_wilson1@me.com.

May is the last month that the local chapter of the ASSE will meet before summer break.