

Issue 3 December 2010

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Staff Profile

In October we welcomed Carla Phillips into the accent family.

Carla, a registered nurse brings extensive nursing and workers compensation experience into the Business Services Unit.

"I am very excited about the new experiences and challenges that I will encounter".

Carla's approach to return to work is face to face communication and ongoing support throughout the rehabilitation process.

Accent has received very positive feedback with Carla's work to date, and we wish her all the best in her future rehabilitation experiences.

Message from the Director

2010 has been a busy year for change within the HR industry. Employers and services such as Accent have faced workers compensation premium estimation changes, rehabilitation provider process changes and a national body of workplace rehabilitation approval. OHS continues down the path of a nationally consistent framework that will see employers faced with harsher penalties for breaching OHS laws. HR consultants have had to get their heads and processes around the ambiguous changes from Workchoices to Fair Workplace. And in the mix of it all, employers have been strongly encouraged to consider the health wellness and safety of all employees into the future – increased smoking laws is an example of this.

So with 2011 upon us it will be interesting to see where these changes take us.

Rest assured, Accent will keep informed and abreast of all the changes as they come through and determine the outcome they will have for businesses across NSW.

In the meantime, I thank you for your support throughout 2010 and we look forward to assisting you in the new year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Accent.

Daniel De Paoli



NSW Floods

In recent weeks floods have devastated parts of NSW particularly in the Wagga Wagga area.

With Christmas fast approaching and the need for Christmas cheer in the area, The Salvation Army has deployed volunteers and the emergency services teams to assist in what ever capacity they can.

Please donate to the Salvos this Christmas and help our rural families recover from this disaster.

www.salvos.org.au



Accent will be closed from midday 24 December 2010 and will re-open on 4 January 2011. From all the staff at accent we wish you and your families a safe and wonderful Christmas, and a prosperous new year.

Injury Management & OHS

A FAQ: What are our OHS obligations in regards to Christmas parties?

Functions in the workplace are no different to any other OHS issue
A risk management approach needs to be taken

Employers have a duty of care under the OHS legislation for their workers and that includes at Christmas or at other functions whether or not they are held off or onsite.

As an employer, to minimise the risk of injury, you need to perform a risk assessment. You must identify the hazards, assess the risks and implement controls and you need to be able to show you took all due diligence to keep the risk as low as reasonably practicable.

Workplace parties or functions can be important in improving morale and team building within an organisation and cancelling an expected party could result in unnecessary workplace disharmony.

However, as an employer you need to be aware of your responsibilities and implement measures to ensure you meet your duty of care requirements.

Should we serve alcohol at the party?

Excessive alcohol consumption is a major contributing factor to dangerous and inappropriate behaviour.

If you are going to serve alcohol at a work function, the following precautionary measures should be taken to minimise the risk of harm to the health and safety of your employees:

- > formally reminding employees such as in a memo about the dangers of excessive drinking and the effects of driving under the influence;

- to avoid excessive drinking;

- > providing soft drinks and light alcoholic drinks and preferably serving food;

- > supervising staff to prevent excessive drinking and inappropriate behaviour;

- > using taxis, public transport or non-drinking drivers;

- > make sure there is plenty of non-alcoholic drinks available; and

Further, employers should make sure their alcohol and drug policy and staff social functions policy is clearly communicated.

Accelerate

In mid 2010, Accent launched Accelerate.

Since its inception, the early intervention capped program has been well received by our clients and WorkCover agents.

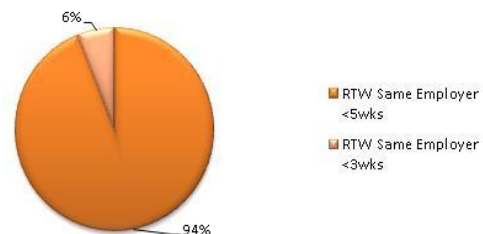
Accelerate aims to have an injured worker return to pre injury duties / hours within 5 weeks.

With the support from our BSU staff, our results show that with a focus on early intervention and open communication, a 5 week RTW timeframe is achievable.

For more information regarding Accelerate, log onto our website or contact us for an information pack

www.accentonhealth.com.au

Accelerate Program Outcomes 2010 Closures



Are we liable for incidents at or after the party?

Employers can be liable if employees are injured in the course of the function or on their way home, even if they are under the influence of alcohol.

Thanks to NSW Business Chamber for kindly answering this question for us:

www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au

From: www.localtalk.com.au

According to a recent study, the average Australian gains between 2.5 and 4 Kilograms over the Christmas Season- beginning mid-December when many school, work and community Christmas functions take place, and ending during New Year's festivities.

While many attribute the cause for this weight gain as excessive eating during the holiday period, much of the weight gain is due more to lack of exercise and physical activity. If you are burning off as much as you are gaining from the extra Christmas food indulgences, then you should be able to survive the Christmas period without the appearance of too much bulge.

Many people put off fitness during the holidays believing that they do not have the time to exercise and simultaneously enjoy the holiday season. According to leading health professionals, this is the reason that gyms are packed with new members shortly after New Year's, and it is also the reason why most New Year's fitness regimes fail. Staying fit and enjoying the holidays at the same time can be done. Here are some simple tips to help you stay fit and avoid weight gain over the Christmas period:

Eat before you go – you will be less tempted to over-indulge if you have already eaten. Particularly try to consume large amounts of water as this will help you to feel full and you will be less likely to over eat. The feeling of thirst is often mistaken for hunger. In Australia, where it is particularly warm around Christmas time, consuming large amounts of water is very important for your general health and rehydration. Water helps counter the dehydrating affects of travel or alcoholic beverages.

Choose treats wisely – Pick something you only have during the holidays and not something that is available all of the time. This will limit your intake of unnecessary kilojoules, and the holiday season will still seem 'special' as they are treats you would not usually consume.

Don't skip meals – While it might be tempting to skip meals thinking that will make up for the holiday treats, it is actually counterproductive. Skipping meals causes the body to begin storing fat. It is better to eat regular meals, but eat them in moderation (smaller meal sizes).

Control your drinking – Alcohol is an easy way to add the calories. Avoid mixed and fruity drinks. And for those Christmas traditionalists out there- you should particularly try to avoid drinking Egg Nog- it has at least 350 calories per serving.

Exercise whenever you can – Exercise doesn't just mean a trip to the gym. Christmas is a busy time, especially for families, so try to find practical ways to exercise as part of your daily routine. Park a distance from the shops to burn a few extra calories walking, use the stairs as often as you can, and plan holiday activities that involve a level of physical fitness such as bike riding or swimming (as opposed to going to the movies or playing computer games).

Make it a family affair – Plan activities to do, such as walking the neighborhood to view the holiday lights, which involve your whole family. Kids become particularly stalwart over the holidays so encourage them to enjoy physical activities, which will benefit them as well as yourself (as you accompany them on the activity).

Don't forget strength training – Maintain your muscle mass by breaking down your routine to basics. Many people tend to make-up for Christmas indulgences by over doing cardio- but strength training is just important in maintaining your fitness.

Don't set unrealistic exercise goals – Aim to exercise 30 minutes a day. Its alright to divide it up into 10 minute intervals during the day. You will feel better about yourself and your fitness level if you set smaller goals which are achievable, rather than larger goals you are unable to meet.

So approach the holiday season with the idea of keeping everything in moderation. By following these simple tips you can still have fun this Christmas Season without gaining that unwanted bulge.

Sudoku

3		7						
4		9	7		1	3		5
				3			8	
				4			6	
2		4	1		6	5		3
1		5						
	3		6					9
7		1			9	8		
	2		3					1



Joke of the Month

Bedside Manners

Susie's husband had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months. Things looked grim, but she was by his bedside every single day.

One day as he slipped back into consciousness, he motioned for her to come close to him. She pulled the chair close to the bed and leaned her ear close to be able to hear him.

"You know" he whispered, his eyes filling with tears, "you have been with me through all the bad times. When I got fired, you stuck right beside me. When my business went under, there you were. When we lost the house, you were there. When I got shot, you stuck with me. When my health started failing, you were still by my side. "And you know what?"

"What, dear?" she asked gently, smiling to herself.

"I think you're bad luck."