WEEKLY SAFETY TIP – 9/12/11 – CONTAGION MOVIE: FACT AND FICTION

This past week, on 9/9/11, the movie Contagion hit the big screens across the US. The movie is based on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the scientists that work there. In fact, some of the scenes for the movie were filmed in the Atlanta, Georgia offices of the CDC. The premise of the movie is that a fast moving, highly contagious disease – an epidemic - is racing through populations world wide, and the movie focuses on the lives of the scientists trying to stop it.

The movie brings focus to the issues of pandemics – outbreaks of disease that affect an entire country and/or the world. It also highlights the elite team from the CDC – the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), which might be the CDC's version of the CIS – Atlanta. To learn more about the EIS, you can follow this link: Epidemic Intelligence Service http://www.cdc.gov/24-7/SavingLives/disease_detectives/.

While much of the drama about the fast spreading epidemic in Contagion is over-stated, there is some benefit to the movie. It brings to mind that flu season is about here. The common flu accounts for thousands of fatalities annually. Many more become very ill – which can affect you at work as well as at home. While exotic diseases are attractive to movie-goers, it is important for us to be reminded how to stay healthy, and avoid all illness, including the flu and colds.

How do you stay healthy and prevent illnesses?

- Eat healthy foods and drink enough water: A healthy diet, with foods rich in anti-oxidants and vitamins such as vegetables, fruits, berries, etc., and plenty of clean water goes a long way towards keeping you healthy.
- Stay active: You don't have to join a gym to stay active. Walk around the block, play Frisbee with your children, park your car at the far end of a parking lot and take a few extra steps per day, use the stairs rather than the elevator when possible.
- Wash your hands: This can't be stated enough. Warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds. Before eating, and after touching publicly used shopping carts, door knobs, handrails, etc. As many times as you want.
- Get vaccinated against common, preventable diseases: Many health plans offer free flu and/or reasonably priced flu vaccinations. SCM encourages our staff to take work time to get vaccinated, and hopes our clients and friends do the same.
- Get adequate rest: 8 hours of sleep does more than provide "beauty" rest, it allows your body the time to fight off diseases and infections.

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is using information from the movie to highlight the kickoff to their "Get Ready for the Flu" campaign. To learn more about their campaign, and download some fact sheets, available in both English and Spanish, follow this link: http://www.getreadyforflu.org/contagion.htm

SCM offers our prayers of gratitude and thanks for those who gave all for our country in the past 10 years since 9/11. We honor one such hero on our facebook page. Read about Rick, and find out why he was so special.