

ACC News

»» A newsletter for health care professionals

»» SEPTEMBER 2007 – ISSUE 105

Prevent and manage pain, discomfort and injury in your workplace

As a health professional, you need little introduction to work-related discomfort, pain and injury. These conditions are common in all workplaces, but especially those where employees perform strenuous tasks – such as in the health professions.

Fortunately, our understanding of the factors that contribute to work-related discomfort, pain and injury – and measures we can take to mitigate them – has advanced considerably in recent years. Taking advantage of this, ACC has developed a range of resources that reinforce preventive and management measures you can adopt in your workplace.

The resources are designed to complement your overall health and safety management strategy and help you to avoid the likely costs and disruptions of either you or an employee(s) being injured at work.

They include:

- »» Warm-up and stretch posters for display in frequently used areas to promote simple, effective exercises before and after physical tasks and during breaks, to reduce the risk of injury. To order posters, phone 0800 844 657 and quote numbers ACC2292 and ACC2293
- »» Work Smart Tips – health version. This web-based programme enables you to create fold-out, wallet-sized cards featuring safety information that can be customised for you and your staff. You can include everything from stretches and exercises to return-to-work programmes. Visit www.acc.co.nz/worktips
- »» ‘Implementing a Health and Safety System for Residential Care’ course. This course is for managers or people with responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. With a focus on hazard management and incident investigation, it can be delivered as a full-day workshop or two separate modules. For details, phone 0800 844 657
- »» HabitAtWork. This online resource provides comprehensive information on discomfort, pain and injury in the workplace. You can explore the myths and realities of discomfort, pain and injury, and view advice on how to work in comfort and avoid pain. Visit www.habitatwork.co.nz or, if you’d like it on your Intranet, call 0800 844 657 and order a CD by quoting number ACC2288.

All these resources are free, so please take advantage of this opportunity to avoid discomfort, pain and injury and reinforce employee wellbeing in your workplace.

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Modified Tai Chi and the Otago Exercise Programme

ACC has recently held a nationwide tender process for Otago Exercise Programme (OEP) and modified Tai Chi provider contracts. Contract negotiations are underway on both programmes, with successful OEP providers to be announced during September and modified Tai Chi providers in October.

Reducing pharmacy charges for claimants – special authority funding

Most ACC claimants qualify for reduced pharmacy charges through the special authority funding provided for in the PHARMAC Pharmaceutical Schedule. However, many are still paying high pharmacy charges - either because pharmacies haven't received valid special authority funding numbers or because prescribers haven't renewed the special authority numbers before they expire.

Info for prescribers

If you're a prescriber, you should seek and receive a special authority number before you write prescriptions to make sure claimants, and ACC, pay minimal charges. You'll need to apply to renew the special authority number before it expires (you can do this up to five months in advance of the expiry date).

All special authority forms are available at www.pharmac.govt.nz. If you're registered for, and apply, using the online system, you'll get a rapid response; HealthPAC is approving most online applications within 10 seconds!

Note that if a claimant doesn't meet the Schedule's special authority funding criteria, you should complete an ACC1171 (request for funding from ACC for non-subsidised pharmaceuticals), send it to ACC and receive ACC funding approval before writing the prescription.

Info for pharmacies

Pharmacies that need to know whether claimants have current special authority approval should contact HealthPAC on 0800 243 666. If a claimant doesn't have a special authority number, HealthPAC will help you to obtain approval (including liaising with the prescriber and/or district health board) and subsequent funding for your dispensing.

ACC45 – alerts to ACC

The ACC45 injury claim form has a number of fields you can use to signal that ACC should take further action on a claim.

When completing the ACC45:

- ❖ complete fully Section D: 'Is this a work-related gradual process, disease or infection claim?' and 'Has the patient been admitted to hospital?'
- ❖ when detailing work capacity, use the US Department of Labor's Work Classifications (you'll find a copy in the GP Return to Work Guide that was released last year). Using these classifications ensures that employers, ACC and treatment providers are using the same language and helps when developing plans to enable claimants to continue working or return to work safely
- ❖ if your patient needs assistance, tick the 'Rehabilitation Assistance required' box. This will alert us when we register the claim and we can let the contact centre know straight away
- ❖ if your patient needs time off work, complete the appropriate section to ensure minimal delays in their receiving weekly compensation.

We're committed to responding to claims (and making payments to providers) as quickly as possible, so please lodge your ACC45 promptly – by sending manual claims daily where practical and electronic forms regularly through the day. And remember to provide accurate information – if it needs correcting, there may be a delay in your patients getting the help and support they need.

ACC45 – an invaluable information gatherer for ethnicity

Every time you fill in an ACC45 injury claim form, you help us to deepen our understanding of claimants and claim trends. For example, information on culture and identity has enabled us to gain valuable insights on Asian claimants and trends...

- ❖ Asians accounted for 4.6% of ACC's new entitlement claims as at 30 June 2006 – up from 3.75% the previous year. This compares with Census 2006 data, which shows that Asians make up 9.1% of the population, up from 6.0% in Census 2001.
- ❖ Asian claimants tend to be younger, with 65% under 40. This is reflected in Statistics New Zealand figures, which show that 68% of Asians are under 40.
- ❖ Asian females aged under 40 account for 26.5% of ACC's total new Asian entitlement claims. Census 2006 figures tell us that they make up 35% of the population, indicating a lower claim rate versus the population numbers.
- ❖ 39.4% of new Asian claimants are males under 40. Statistics show they make up 33.6% of the population, indicating a higher claim rate than population numbers.
- ❖ Only 4.6% of Asian new claimants are over 65. This is in proportion with Statistics New Zealand figures showing 4.7% of Asians are over 65.

Given these statistics, ACC is trying to understand the reasons behind the disproportionate claim rates by young Asian females compared with young Asian males.

The information you provide on the ACC45 plays a key role in helping us to make sure claimants get access to the services they need when they're injured. Please help us by filling in the form accurately.

New and updated resources

New neck sprain resource for claimants

A 'Knowing about your neck sprain' brochure (ACC 4059) is now available to give to patients. You can order the brochure at www.acc.co.nz under For Providers > Resources > Claimant Resources.

2007 Treatment Provider Handbook

The 2007 Treatment Provider Handbooks have been posted to practices and district health boards. You can also:

- read and download the Handbook at www.acc.co.nz under For Providers > Resources
- order extra copies, either as hard copy or on CD (note the CD is only compatible with PCs), from www.acc.co.nz under For Providers > Resources.

Falls prevention resources

Updated resources promoting falls prevention can now be ordered from www.acc.co.nz/older-adult-fall-prevention.

Changes at ACC's Wellington branch

ACC's Wellington branch and the Wellington Long Term Claims Unit have moved to new premises on the corner of Wakefield and Taranaki Streets. The contact details for both are unchanged:

Wellington branch

PO Box 2521
Wellington 6140
Ph: 04 918 4020
Fax: 04 918 4001

Long Term Claims Unit

PO Box 3467
Wellington 6140
Ph: 04 918 4225
Fax: 04 918 7151

New appointment

Marilyn Elliot, currently the Manager of ACC's Masterton Branch, will take up the role of Wellington Branch Manager in early October. Marilyn has an extensive background with ACC and has been involved in a number of projects requiring high-level expertise.

Dental update

Dental crowns – a reminder

Just a reminder that prior ACC approval is still required for all dental crowns, not just those for under 18-year-olds – and that crown prep must not start until you get this approval in writing. This requirement was covered in the February 2007 issue of ACC News and again in July 2007. The criteria and requirement apply until further notice.

About prior approval

ACC only requires that you apply for prior approval for crowns. However, we do recommend you get approval before treatment if you're not sure whether ACC will cover the teeth and treatment. In all other cases, simply submit an invoice once the work is complete.

'Ultra' complex coronal reconstruction in composite resin

We received a number of queries about an article in the August issue of ACC News on 'Ultra' complex coronal reconstruction in composite resin.

A new policy has applied since 1 August 2007. It was developed in response to feedback from dentists that Regulations DR9 at \$175 is not a realistic ACC contribution if we seek to encourage quality complex coronal reconstruction in composite resin instead of a crown.

The following codes now apply:

- DR6 Non-metallic simple filling
- DR7 Non-metallic filling (more than one surface) or DY11 non-metallic filling for under 18 years
- DR9 or DY16 Complex reconstruction in composite crown is for up to 50% of the coronal structure
- DR9+DR7 'Ultra' complex reconstruction in composite crown is for 'more' than 50% of the coronal structure (eg. 51%).

You can invoice ACC both DR9 and DR7 (DY11 and DY16 if your patient is under 18) for the one tooth when the reconstruction of a crown in composite resin involves more than 51% of the coronal structure. You'll need to supply with your invoice a photo and/or X-ray of the tooth so that ACC can ascertain that the treatment to be paid is the 'Ultra' complex. If the diagnostics don't support the Ultra complex costs, ACC will pay DR9 only. Prior approval is not required.

Updates

If you'd like to receive dental news and updates from ACC, please phone the Provider Helpline on 0800 222 070 and provide the name of your practice manager and an email address for the surgery.

Providing X-rays

Please make sure you take X-rays at the time of patient injuries. All X-rays, photographs and diagnostics sent for prior approval must include dates.

Completing the ACC42 dental registration form

We continue to receive ACC42 dental registration forms that don't provide important information on the oral status of claimants' mouths at the time of injury.

For information on filling in these forms correctly, please refer to your dento-alveolar trauma desktop guide or the articles by Dr Steve Manning in the New Zealand Dental Association's April publication on dental trauma.

Remember, ACC checks all X-rays against the information in the ACC42. If we don't have true or accurate details of the oral health condition of a claimant's injured tooth (or teeth), the ACC42 will probably be sent back to you, resulting in delays in payment for you – and potential delays in treatment for your patient.

Conference reports

New Zealand Manipulative Physiotherapists' Conference, Rotorua, 25-26 August

The Conference, titled 'Manual Therapy Down Under – Performance of the Lower Quartile' provided a great opportunity to hear about current research in New Zealand – particularly research undertaken as part of postgraduate study.

Key speakers included:

- ❖ Peter O'Sullivan, a New Zealand physiotherapist currently working at Curtin University in Western Australia, who presented on current research on the diagnosis of 'non-specific low back pain'
- ❖ Dr Stuart McGill, Professor of Biomechanics at the University of Waterloo in Canada. Dr McGill presented on topics such as appropriate back exercise and preventing back injuries
- ❖ Dr Annelies Pool-Goudzwaard from the Netherlands, who discussed lumbo-pelvic pain.

New Zealand Pain Society Annual Scientific Meeting, Palmerston North, 17-19 August

This multidisciplinary scientific meeting attracted more than 250 attendees, including psychologists, anaesthetists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and nurses. It aimed to "welcome newcomers from all disciplines to the field of pain... to break the barriers between the disciplines and provide opportunities to apply concepts existing in one field to related fields".

ACC sponsored the meeting for the first time this year. It provided an ideal opportunity for ACC's new 'pain champions' to raise their profile with clinicians. Pain champions are branch case managers who have a good understanding of current contracted pain management services and act as mentors with new staff. They also liaise closely with service performance managers.

Upcoming conferences and events

Health Innovation Awards

10 October, Wellington Town Hall, Wellington.
www.healthinnovationawards.co.nz.

District Health Board Research Fund Workshop

10–12 October, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.
<http://dhbrfworkshop2007.hrc.govt.nz/index.php>
or contact Anna Deason on adeason@hrc.govt.nz or 09 303 5081.

New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists Clinical Workshops

11–13 October, Cromwell, Central Otago.
www.nzaot.com.

New Zealand Home Health Association 2007 National Conference

15–17 October, Spencer on Byron Hotel, Takapuna, Auckland.
www.nzhha.org.nz.

Osteoporosis Awards

16 October, Grand Hall, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.
www.bones.org.nz/medal.php.

District Health Board Occupational Health and Safety conference

25–26 October, Spencer on Byron Hotel, Takapuna, Auckland.
www.sah.co.nz/Conferences/2007/DHBOH+SConference.

Weaving the Strands – Injury Prevention Network of Aotearoa New Zealand

29–31 October, Napier War Memorial, Conference Centre.
www.ipn.org.nz.

Gradual Process Claims

GPs who have lodged claims for gradual process injuries will know that when ACC receives the ACC 45, the GP concerned will be sent a questionnaire seeking further details of the condition, to complete and return to ACC.

To assist GPs and to speed up the cover process for their patients, the questionnaire concerned is now on the ACC provider website, (www.acc.co.nz use 'for provider' tab).

GPs completing a gradual process claim are asked to process the ACC 45 in the usual way, and at the time of the consultation download and complete the questionnaire (ACC 271). The questionnaire should be mailed to the Christchurch Contact Centre, P O Box 13-447, CHRISTCHURCH, 8141. Attn. Sue Hanton. Your assistance in this way will be greatly appreciated.