Reducing Flu in the Workplace

Up to 20% of people in the United States contract the flu each year. The peak of the flu season occurs during the months of January and February with the average flu-related absence being one work week.

In order to prevent illness exposure incidents in the workplace, the following universal precautions should be taken:

1. Employees should wash hands frequently with soap and water. Hand washing is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs & illnesses.

2. Avoid hand-to-face contact. Hand-to-face transmission is the number one way in which the flu is spread.

3. Each employee should remember to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and immediately dispose of the tissue, then wash their hands. Or cough/sneeze into sleeve if no tissue available.

4. Clean desktops, keyboards, doorknobs, and other work surfaces regularly.

5. Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – registered cleaning products. Carefully read the cleaning product labels to insure that they will effectively kill influenza and cold viruses.

6. The CDC recommends that employees should stay home when they are ill, especially if symptoms include a high fever, and at least 24 hours after the fever is gone.

Universal Precautions, when practiced regularly, are a method of infection control and can greatly reduce the spread of illness in the workplace. A healthy workplace is a place of greater motivation and productivity, with fewer absences.

FYI, proper hand washing includes: Wetting yours hands with clean, running water (warm or cold). Lather your hands by rubbing them together with soap. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Rinse and Dry.

Encourage employees to get their Flu Shots Annually!
FOLLOWING AN INFECTION

FLU TRAVELS

Flu viruses constantly mutate, making it tough for our immune defenses to recognize the virus and combat it. Since the current strain of the H1N1 virus (known as swine flu) is relatively new, it may be more contagious than seasonal flu, although it seems no more virulent and most cases should be resolved without significant medical intervention. Here’s a look at how flu infections spread:

1. John goes to work feeling fine, but when he is out to lunch, Jill sneezes into his hands and then uses John’s phone and keyboard, working during the afternoon. John pick up virus on his hands while leaving, he rubs his eyes and transmits virus into his system.

2. Karen takes her son Billy to the playground; he plays with his friends — some sneeze and cough over the equipment. Fortunately, Karen uses alcohol wipes on Billy before he can rub his nose or eye. They return home free of virus.

3. John enjoys an evening with family; unfortunately, he does not realize that he is spreading virus around the house. He can take a day or so after you become infected before you show signs of illness.

4. John and Billy share a bowl of pop corn, now Billy has virus.

5. The disease is at its most contagious levels and Karen tries to protect herself from breathing in the virus on the morning of the fourth day. John is fever gone and he figures he can go back to work. Unfortunately, he is still shedding thousands of virus in his saliva.

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7. John and Billy need to be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to work or school; some older, younger, or weaker people can still be contagious for a couple of weeks because their immune system has a harder time eliminating the virus from their bodies.

8. John and Billy school are in a day for at least 20 seconds, this is what it takes to prevent the spread of germs and viruses, less than half the people wash this long and this often.

STAY HEALTHY

Flu can survive on a bill for up to 10 days if someone with a virus sneezed on it, so wash your hands after paying for that fast food lunch.

WASH HANDS

Nasal flu

Vaccine

Health officials recommend most people get a flu shot — including for the H1N1 virus.

VACCINATION

• Vaccination provides up to 60% protection.

• Swine flu shots should be ready by October.

• It takes about two weeks before protection begins.

• H1N1 vaccination will be in two doses; a couple weeks apart, healthy adults may only need one H1N1 vaccination.

• Seasonal flu vaccination is one shot, but for children under 9 they may need two seasonal flu shots, bringing the total to four.

SNAZZY STAY HEALTHY

Hand sanitizer

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