

# ***WORKER WELLNESS***

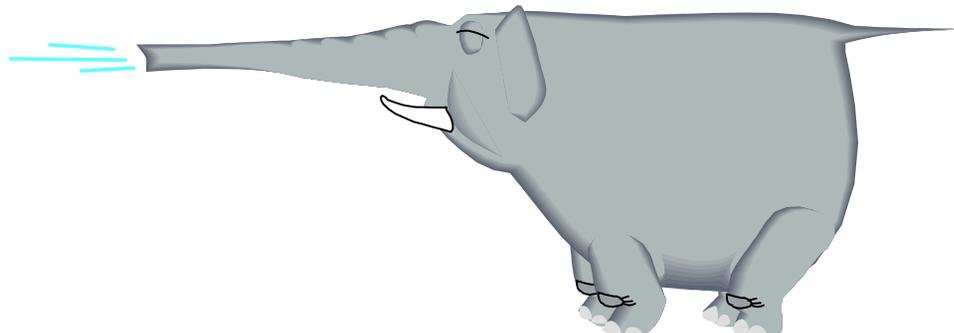


**“Reducing the Spread of Germs”**



# Companies worry about Workplace Absenteeism During Flu Season

- On the heels of the 2009 H1N1 scare, companies are taking a closer look at how to avoid wide-spread workplace absenteeism and productivity declines if faced with another flu pandemic.
- This can be difficult when large numbers of workers are out with colds or the flu



# **PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

- Nearly 71% of the companies/facilities in the U.S. have a program or strategy in place to limit the transfer of germs in the workplace.
- Hand Hygiene Education is the primary prevention practice in 97% of the cases.
- The message is getting through to companies that simple steps like frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs in the workplace.
- Washing your hands is one of the most important things to do in preventing the spread of germs from the worksite to employees' **homes** and **families.**

# THE HIDDEN NUMBERS....

- Up to 20% of the population gets the seasonal flu annually, while more than 200,000 people are hospitalized with flu-related complications.
- 36,000 people in this country die from flu-related causes each year.
- The \$\$\$\$ lost  thru these illnesses don't show up in loss reports or workers comp spread sheets.
- Sick Day's are hidden loss factors that affect every employee.



# The Economic Consequences

- A 2005 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that the impact of a flu pandemic would be \$71.3 to \$166.5 billion, excluding disruptions to commerce and society.



# HOW GERMS CAN SPREAD

- The flu and other infections generally are spread by coughing, sneezing, talking near someone and by touching unsanitized hands to the face. People may become infected by touching something — such as a surface or object — with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Studies show that viruses can survive on surfaces for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.
- Germs can be spread when people touch common surfaces, such as equipment and “hot spots” like dispensers & doorknobs in heavily trafficked areas such as bathrooms and break rooms.



# Take precautions to avoid spreading germs to your co-workers

- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing — and then throwing the tissue in the trash after use is a good practice. All workers should avoid touching their eyes and mouth.
- Masks that meet or exceed NIOSH N95 standards also may provide protection.



# Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent germs from spreading

- Clean your hands often. Use soap and warm water and rub hands vigorously together for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based instant hand sanitizers may be used.
- Rinse hands well to remove soap residue, then dry hands gently using a paper towel. Drying hands with a paper towel can reduce bacteria on average by up to 77 percent, while high-speed and warm-air dryers actually can increase the number of bacteria on the hands, surfaces and in the air, according to a recent study. Hand drying with disposable towels also has been found to help prevent the spread of germs.
- **Use a paper towel to turn off the water faucet to avoid recontaminating hands.**
- Set up remote hand washing stations with easy-to-use instant hand sanitizers to make it easier for line and production workers to clean their hands while on the job.

# ***SURFACE SANITATION***

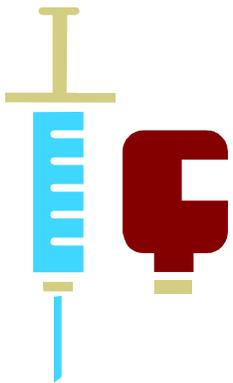


- To break the cycle of germ transmission, particularly in the restroom, where germs can flourish. Surfaces that frequently are touched may serve as pools of contamination.
- Touchless restroom dispensing systems can help make the task of using & make maintaining the restroom easier, more efficient and more cost-effective.
- Touchless systems can be electronic or mechanical no-touch towel dispensers, thus with no levers to pull, will provide the same hygienic benefits as sensor-activated dispensers

# WARDING OFF THE FLU



- Discourage workers from using one another's desks, phones, computers or work tools
- Take proper care of PPE, regularly replacing disposable PPE, properly cleaning & disinfecting reusable equipment
- Instruct workers on protective behaviors



# Take time to get a flu vaccine.

- Its recommended a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
- While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- The [2010-2011 flu vaccine](#) will protect against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the 2010-2011 season vaccine is available.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.



# 10 Tips for Staying Festively Flu-Free



1. **Do the air kiss.** Greet your family and friends by giving them a hug and kissing the air near their cheeks. If there's mistletoe dangling between you and a friend, eschew the smack on the lips with a fake peck on the cheek instead.
2. **Wash your hands.** Always wash your hands before you start digging into the appetizers at a party. You should always wash your hands after you've finished to keep your hands as germ-free as possible.
3. **Don't use your fingers.** As a party guest, use serving spoons or forks to put food on your plate instead of just reaching for it. As a party host, be sure to put out plenty of serving utensils and provide people with alternatives to reaching into bowls, such as creating individual servings of your offerings.
4. **Get creative with your cups.** When hosting a party, come up with fun ways of personalizing cups so there aren't any mix-ups. Avoid serving beverages in their original containers for the same reason, so there aren't multiple identical cans or bottles floating around.

5. **Carry hand sanitizer with you.** Remember: the person who sneezes into her hands transfers mucus and viruses onto public doorknobs, handrails, that product you just picked up or the change the cashier gave you. Viruses can survive hours to days on surfaces or your skin. If there isn't a place to wash your hands nearby, use alcohol gel to sanitize your hands before you eat any food or even touch your face, particularly your nose or mouth. Keep some in your purse or pocket for those holiday shopping excursions.
6. **Cough in your sleeve.** If you feel a cough or sneeze coming on, be sure to cough in your sleeve or the inside of your jacket to avoid spreading any microbes to people standing near you at a party. A cough or sneeze can spray droplets of water containing viruses that can contaminate surfaces as far as 6 feet away. Virus then can be transferred to someone if he touches his mouth or nose after coming in contact with that area.
7. **Attending a religious service?** Try to keep between 3 to 6 feet away from other people and politely refuse to share the communion wine goblet. Instead of shaking hands or hugging, try greeting others with a friendly wave or the new health-inspired "elbow greeting," which consists of a friendly – and germ-dissemination-free – elbow bump.
8. **Get enough sleep.** Lack of sleep weakens your immune system and makes you more susceptible to illness. Aim for a consistent 6 to 8 hours of sleep every night, even during the busy season of shopping, planning and entertaining.
9. **Sick? Stay away.** If you feel like you are coming down with a cold or flu, stay at home until you feel better. There is always next year's round of holiday shindigs to host or attend. Plus there are plenty of holiday specials on the tube to give you a boost of merriment.
10. **Cold or flu?** A cold can strike anytime, but October to March is flu season. If your symptoms include a headache and high temperature, contact your health care provider.

# **FOCUS ON THE HOTSPOTS AT WORK & AT HOME:**



- **all doorknobs**
- **the computer mouse and keyboard**
- **cell phones and telephones**
- **computer game remotes**
- **the TV remote control**
- **kids toys and other surfaces kids touch**

# The 2 Questions always asked:



- Can herbal, homeopathic or other folk remedies protect against the flu?

There is no scientific evidence that any herbal, homeopathic or other folk remedies have any benefit against influenza.

- What kills influenza virus?

Influenza virus is destroyed by heat (167-212°F [75-100°C]). In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols are effective against influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for sufficient length of time.

# **GERMS ARE SPREADING...**

- Nearly **22 million school days** are lost annually due to the common cold.
- More than two-thirds (32 million) of school-aged children (aged 5–17 years) in the United States missed school in the past 12 months due to illness or injury.
- 52.2 million cases of the common cold affect Americans under age 17 each year.
- About 10 million U.S. adults (ages 18 - 69) were unable to work during 2002 due to health problems.
- Frequent handwashing and not sharing items such as cups, glasses, and utensils with an infected person should decrease the spread of virus to others.

# ILLNESSES IMPACT EVERYONE

- Infectious disease accounts for millions of lost school days and cost the U.S. \$120 billion a year.
- Teacher illness costs time and money - not to mention the negative effects that teacher absences may have on student learning. In fact, teachers can be absent from school more days a year than students. One study found that teacher illness-related absences averaged 5.3 days a year, in contrast to an average of 4.5 days a year for students.
- The 15 leading causes of death in the US for 2006 include influenza and pneumonia.



# **SAFETY TIPS.... {AT HOME}**

- Keep your kitchen floor clean, especially if you have young children crawling around, touching the germ-laden floor with their hands. Babies' hands invariably go right into their mouths.
- The garbage disposal and kitchen sponge both need attention to keep germs at bay. You can pour a bleach solution in the disposal a few times each week, let it stand for five minutes, and then turn on the disposal and rinse out the solution. To disinfect the kitchen sponge, which is the most bacteria-laden object in your kitchen because it stays damp, toss it into the dishwasher each day and let it wash with your dishes. Have plenty of extra dishtowels as these also get filled with germs from wiping up raw food and drying dirty hands.

# IF YOU LOSE THE BATTLE & CATCH THE FLU....

- Its **recommended that you stay home for at least 24 hours** after your fever (100°F or 37.8°C) is gone except to get medical care or for other things you have to do and no one else can do for you. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®.) You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.
- **Avoid close contact with others**, especially those who might easily get the flu, such as people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, young children, and infants.
- **Wear a facemask** – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.
- **Get plenty of rest.**
- **Drink clear fluids** such as water, broth, sports drinks, or electrolyte beverages made for infants to prevent becoming dehydrated.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes.**
- **Clean hands with soap and water**, especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into your hands. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands (hands should be washed if visibly soiled).
- **Talk to your doctor about the prescription antiviral.**

# **WHO'S WASHING & WHO'S NOT**

- Students don't clean their hands often or well enough. In one study, only 58% of female and 48% of male middle and high school students washed their hands after using the bathroom. Of these, only 33% of the females and 8% of the males used soap.
- Adult hand cleaning behaviors also need improvement. In one study, 92% said they always wash their hands in public restrooms, but only 77% were observed doing so.

# How Vulnerable Are You?

- **Students and Teachers**: Time spent where lots of people are crowded together, as in dorms and classrooms, raises the risk.
- **Children** are the major transmitters. Parents and teachers, are in more danger of contracting the flu, because of the lack of any immunity to the virus.
- **Business Travelers**: Airplanes can be quite bad, because they recirculate air, and that's ideal for spreading a flu virus throughout the whole cabin.
- Those in their **20's or 30's** may be at greater risk than the elderly. "Young adults spend a lot more time in groups.
- **Athletes and Sports Fans** Virus transmission would be fast at an indoor basketball game, at a bar, or where fans are gathered in front of a big-screen TV. "In the event of a pandemic, you might see indoor sporting events canceled.
- **Social & Religious Practices** Handshakes, kissing, and close indoor seating make churches, synagogues, and mosques likely places to pick up the flu. "Congregating in one room is undoubtedly the way to spread infection.
- **Commuters** Those who take trains, subways, and buses will be at increased risk of contracting the flu. "Anytime people start coughing and sneezing close by, risk of transmission rises.

# Your Mom Was Right!!!! Research

proves that failing to bundle up can cause you to catch a cold.....

- CONTACT

If your partner starts sneezing, or the person in the next cubicle begins hacking like a coal miner, or the kids run a fever, heighten your alert. They might be packing a cold or flu virus, one of a horde of strains that plague people all winter. Those bugs want you next, but there are only three ways to get in: your nose, mouth, and eyes.



# Your Best Defense:



- First, get a flu shot.
- Second, from September through March—prime cold and flu season—drink even more water than usual. The mucous membranes that line the upper respiratory tract is one of your body's first defenses and work best when thoroughly moist.
- Eight, 8-ounce glasses of water every day is the minimum; drink more and you're ahead of the game.

# INCUBATION

- **Soon after entering**, the virus has worked its way from your mouth or nose through the mucous membranes to your body's cells. The bug fools the special receptors that act as doorways, then walks on in and makes itself comfortable—and you miserable.
- **Your Best Defense:** Start every day this cold season with a walk around the block. Contrary to what your mother told you, brief exposure to cold—after a good warm-up—stimulates the immune system. Exercise can also help you feel better, as long as you don't overdo it. Although a study reports that working out neither lengthens nor shortens recovery time, the feel-good hormones you produce, called endorphins, will boost your mood.



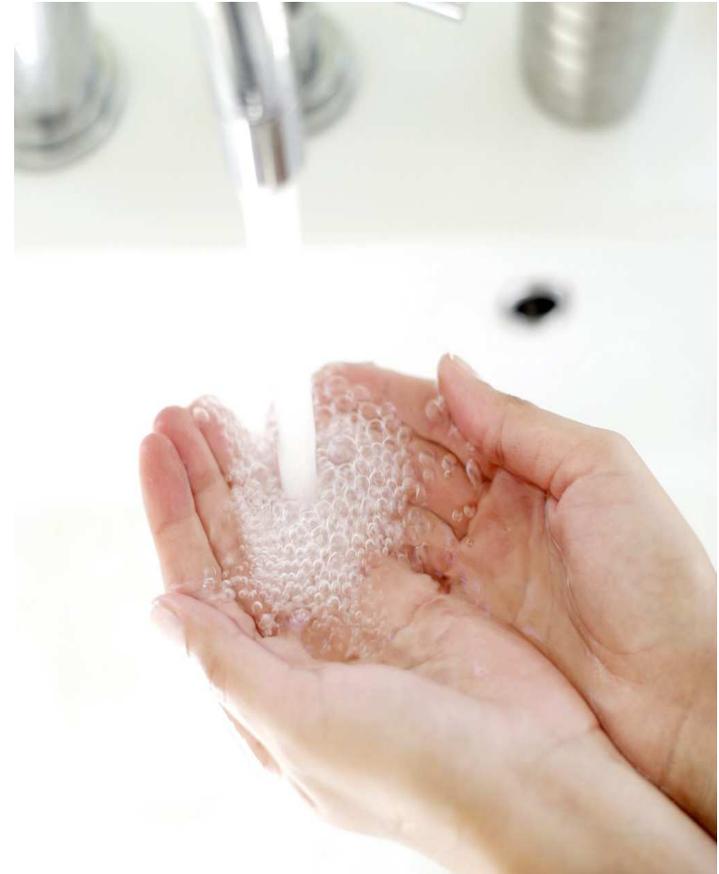
# INFECTION:



- **After attacking a cell**, the virus injects its genetic material inside and copies itself. This process takes about 12-hours, and you won't actually feel sick until two or three of these cycles are complete.
- **Your Best Defense:** Within 24 to 48 hours of a flu strike, ask your doctor for amantadine—it'll cut the duration of your misery. Tylenol will help aches and fever. As soon as you notice cold symptoms—runny nose, scratchy throat, fatigue—take a decongestant. But only one dose. The active ingredient, usually a pseudoephedrine combination, will open up the nasal passages and help your body flush away the invaders. Australian researchers found that taking a decongestant just once cut symptoms by 13%.

# **SAFETY TIPS....**

- WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF HAND SANITIZER, REFILL THE BOTTLE WITH MOUTHWASH.
- NEVER USE HAND SANITIZER UNDER RUNNING WATER, IT'LL DILUTE ITS POWER.
- BAR SOAP: NEVER USE TO WASH YOUR HANDS... OTHERS ARE USING IT TO.... LIQUID SOAP IS BEST!!
- WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN!!



# IT'S QUIZ TIME!

1. Frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs? True or False
2. Sick days are hidden loss factors that affect every employee? True or False
3. Germs cannot be spread from dispensers or door knobs? True or False
4. Lack of sleep weakens your immune system and make you more susceptible to illness? True or False
5. Influenza and pneumonia are two of the top fifteen causes of death in the U.S.? True or False