



### When It's Not Nice to Share: Prevent the Spread of Diseases in Your Workplace

*On the one hand, you really need people to show up for work. On the other hand, if people show up for work when they're sniffing, sneezing, coughing, feverish, and miserable, how much work are they really getting done? And how many of their coworkers will call in sick the following week, because of their exposure to the first one who should have stayed home—and didn't? Here's some guidance for your workers on how to keep from spreading their illnesses all around the workplace.*

**Get Vaccinated:** Many infectious diseases can be prevented by vaccinations—including the common annual bout of influenza. The CDC now issues vaccination recommendations for adults that include booster shots for illnesses workers may have been vaccinated against as children, and for other diseases based on age, health status, and other factors. Every year, though, *everyone* who's not allergic or immunocompromised should get a flu shot. Including pregnant women

**Stay Home:** Workers who develop a fever should stay home. Adults are less likely to be feverish than children, though, so how do they make the call? If you're in the first few days of a cold, you're highly contagious and need to stay home. Vomiting and diarrhea are also important signs that you have something contagious and should stay home. Develop a comprehensive illness policy that requires workers to take medical leave for at least the first few days of an illness, until symptoms subside.

**Cover Your Cough:** Because so many diseases—most notably, the flu—can be spread by airborne droplets before symptoms appear, it's important for adults to observe basic hygiene at all times. When they're coughing or sneezing, this means *don't cough or sneeze right into the air*. If you have a tissue or handkerchief, use that; if you don't, then cough into your elbow (not your hand!). Cover that cough or sneeze!

**Wash Your Hands:** Handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of disease. The CDC recommends the following technique: (1) Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap. (2) Lather hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails. Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds. (3) Rinse hands well under clean, running water. (4) Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.

**Disinfect:** Because infectious agents can survive on surfaces, it's important to regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces, especially during cold and flu season. Light switches, door knobs, desk and counter tops, drawer pulls, phones, and keyboards are commonly contaminated surfaces that should be swabbed down with a disinfecting wipe at least once a day. There are lots of things you don't want spreading through your workplace—infectious diseases, carelessness, disregard for safety.

### Home Remedies for Flu

#### Saline Rinse Tips

Mix 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon baking soda in 8 ounces of warm water.

Fill a bulb syringe with the water.

Learn over the bathroom sink, hold one nostril closed with your finger and squirt the mixture into the other side. Let it drain and gently blow your nose. Repeat 2-3 times in each

#### Cough Relief

**Cough syrup:** Try an over-the-counter product to calm your hack. You can select from a suppressant to calm it, an expectorant to help you cough up gunk, or a medicine you put on your skin, like a menthol rub for your chest. **Ask your doctor what you should pick.**

**Don't give over-the-counter cough and cold medicines to children under 4.**

**Cough drops:** Keep sugar-free cough drops or hard candy nearby to calm a tickle in your throat. A teaspoon of honey might also help.

