



# FLU PREVENTION

## GENERAL HYGIENE PRACTICES AT WORK



This talk discusses best personal hygiene practices for workers to stop the spread of the flu virus at work.

**Materials to have on hand:**

- Examples or illustrations of surfaces or objects where flu particles can exist
- Notices where to get the flu vaccine

**Items for attendees to consider during the talk:**

- Do you know the most effective way to stop the spread of the flu virus?
- What are two things you can do to prevent or minimize the spread of the flu at work?

**TALK**

It's flu season, so this is a good time to talk about ways to stop the spread so you and your coworkers stay healthy and so you can protect your families. The flu season usually runs from the early fall to May. The flu is most commonly spread when viral particles are sent in the air by coughing and sneezing. It also spreads when you touch a surface that has viral particles on it and then you touch around your eyes or nose. Symptoms begin all at once, often with a fever, and are usually more severe than cold symptoms. Complications from the flu can lead to pneumonia and death.

*[Discuss the employer's policy, if any, about staying home if a worker has the flu or if working from home is feasible.]*

**Vaccinate**

Get a flu shot or nasal flu vaccine every year. It may be the best and most effective way to prevent getting the flu or from spreading it if you are exposed. The vaccine protects against certain type A and type B influenza viruses but does not protect against the remaining 200 types of cold-causing viruses. Some antiviral drugs can help prevent infection in people at risk and shorten the length of time and severity of symptoms in those who are infected.

Antibiotics only work against bacteria; for example, a sinus infection is caused by bacteria. Antibiotics don't work against the flu or any other type of virus.

**WASH**

Flu viruses can survive for several hours on an exposed surface like countertops or a doorknob once it's outside the body. To stop the spread, follow the WASH procedures:

Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after a cough, a sneeze, or after touching a surface like a doorknob, coffeepot, or refrigerator door handle that's been touched by many people. Use a hand sanitizer whenever soap and water aren't close by.

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**Talk Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor/Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**A**void getting too close to people who are sick. Stay at least 6 feet from infected people to limit further spreading of the virus.

**S**anitize surfaces where people touch frequently. Use a commercial disinfectant or bleach with dilutions as low as 1 part bleach to 10 parts water to kill the virus on a work surface.

**H**old your elbow to your mouth instead of your hand when you sneeze or cough to stop the spread of germs from hand contact. Try to cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and properly dispose of the tissue immediately after use.

If you decide to wear a face mask to stop the spread of your flu or to protect yourself from flu particles in the air, wear the N95-rated respirator. Regular dust masks and surgical masks don't block the movement of the flu virus through the air very well.

As already mentioned, all kinds of surfaces in your work areas can be sources of viral infection when you

touch them if you are infected or when someone else who is infected touches them, such as:

- Handles on the refrigerator, microwave, coffeepot, and door
- Bathroom fixtures
- Countertops
- Food or food containers
- Copier machine buttons or parts
- Hand tools
- Elevator button
- Books and paper
- Phones

Remember, you are not defenseless against the flu. Vaccinate and follow the WASH procedures to stay healthy through the winter.

