

HEALTH ALERT

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Connecticut Department of Public Health
Keeping Connecticut Healthy



Tips for a Healthy Winter Workforce



The winter season is a time for holiday celebrations and gift giving. But a gift nobody wants to receive this season, especially from a co-worker, is a cold or the flu. Every year, up to 20% of people get the flu and almost everyone suffers from cold symptoms, such as fevers, aches and pains, coughing and sneezing at some point during the winter months.

Here are some tips to help you and your co-workers prevent the spread of colds and the flu this winter.

1 Practice Good Hygiene

Viruses that cause colds and the flu spread easily from person to person through coughing and sneezing, as well as touching contaminated surfaces. Make good hygiene practices part of your normal routine.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water and/or hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, and mouth) frequently during working hours.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze to prevent viruses from becoming airborne. Re-wash your hands after coughing or sneezing to avoid infecting others.

2 Get A Flu Shot

Vaccination against influenza is perhaps the best way to avoid catching the flu this winter. Many insurers cover the cost of flu shots, however you can also get a flu shot for relatively low cost from a flu shot clinic.

The flu shot changes every year, so it is important to **get a flu shot every year** to properly protect yourself.

3 Stay Home If You Are Sick

Cold and flu symptoms include cough, fever, chills, runny nose, headache, body aches and sore throat. One person infected with influenza has the potential to infect many other people for up to 5 days after their symptoms begin. If you experience cold or flu symptoms, it is very important that you **stay out of work** to avoid spreading the illness to your co-workers.

- Stay at home and get plenty of bed rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Call your doctor at the onset of symptoms to discuss which cold and flu medications might be appropriate to treat your symptoms.

If you absolutely cannot avoid going into work while you are still sick, avoid large gatherings and meetings. Try to utilize telephone and e-mail correspondence rather than face-to-face contact with co-workers.

For more information on keeping yourself and your co-workers healthy and safe at work this winter, please contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7742.

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