

## **HANDY FLU TIPS**

There's no doubt that having the flu vaccine every year is the best way to stay healthy during the flu season. It can stop you getting sick or help to keep your symptoms mild if you do come down with flu.

Nevertheless, flu is very difficult to avoid. Besides being infected by another person, you can also breathe in virus-laden droplets for up to 30 minutes after they've been sneezed or coughed into the air (air conditioning increase their survival time), or pick up the virus from hard surfaces like desktops, counters or door handles for up to 8 hours after they've been infected.

This being the case, care must be taken around workplaces, public transport, planes, shops and restaurants to avoid the flu.

So after vaccination, building 'flu barriers' like these is the best way to protect yourself and your workforce this flu season:

### **Regular Hand Washing**

Hand hygiene is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, or after coughing or sneezing. Here's the right way to wash your hands effectively:

*Step 1* – Wet your hands with water, then create a good lather with soap.

*Step 2* – Rub your hands together vigorously for 20 seconds, ensuring you rub your wrists and between each finger. Clean under your fingernails, too.

*Step 3* – Rinse your hands thoroughly and dry them with a clean paper towel or air dryer.

*Step 4* – In a public restroom, shut off the tap using a paper towel.

### **Dispense With Flu**

Place dispensers of hand sanitiser (containing at least 60% ethyl alcohol or isopropanol) around the workplace and post signs encouraging staff to regularly wash their hands. Rub sanitiser all over your hands, fingers and wrists until dry.

### **The Hands-off Approach**

Coughing into your hands is just one step from passing on the virus via a hand shake or touching a hard surface. By sneezing or coughing into the crook of your elbow you effectively 'park' the virus in a dead end.

### **Blow and Toss**

Use a tissue to blow your nose or to catch a sneeze, then bin it. Don't leave used tissues on desktops, tables or counters for someone else to dispose of.

### **Take Your Medicine**

Even the best defence isn't perfect: If you do get flu, ask your doctor about an antiviral flu drug like oseltamivir (Tamiflu), peramivir (Rapivab), or zanamivir (Relenza). If taken within 24-48 hours of the first signs of flu, they can help you get better a day or two faster.

Finally, if you do come down with the flu this season, remember that you can still spread the virus for up to a week. Protect your friends, family, and co-workers by staying home until you feel better and your fever has been gone for at least 24 hours.

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