

FLU Preparedness Department Guide 2009

Prepared by: Steuben County Public Health and Nursing Services

Employee Responsibility



It is a well known fact that employees spread many illnesses to their co-workers by going to work sick.

- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone **without** the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Be considerate. Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. Maintain 6 ft. distance from co-workers and clients as much as possible.
- Employers may consider sending sick employees home.

Cover coughs and sneezes



Influenza viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes.

- Place posters to promote covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or, in the absence of a tissue, one's sleeve.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Review work station placement, providing 6 ft. distance between workstations.

Improve hand hygiene



Influenza may be spread by touching surfaces and objects with the flu virus on it and then touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

- Instruct employees to wash their hands often with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers in the workplace.
- Provide individual hand sanitizer at each work station.
- Change hand washing and educational posters frequently in order to refresh and reinforce information to employees and agency clients.

Provide facemasks



Facemasks help stop droplets from being spread by the person wearing them. They also keep splashes or sprays from reaching the mouth and nose of the person wearing the facemask. There may be other circumstances, especially in a healthcare setting, where a higher level of protection is necessary, such as an N95 respirator.

- Instruct employees or clients to wear a facemask if coughing.
- After use, dispose of in trash.
- Hand hygiene is an essential component of using a mask of any sort.

Clean surfaces that are more likely to have frequent hand contact



Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

- Frequently clean all commonly touched surfaces (keyboards, phone receivers, door knobs, etc...) using the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
- No additional disinfection is needed.

Encourage employees to get vaccinated



Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for the control of influenza.

- Encourage employees to get vaccinated for seasonal influenza as soon as possible.
- Encourage employees to get vaccinated for the novel H1N1 influenza when available.
- Consider offering a flu clinic at your worksite.
- Consider granting employees time off from work to get vaccinated, if not offered at the worksite.

Identify employees who are at higher risk for complications of influenza



People who are at higher risk for complications from influenza include: pregnant women; children under 5 years of age; adults and children who have chronic lung disease (such as asthma), heart disease, diabetes, diseases that suppress the immune system and other chronic medical conditions; and those who are 65 years or older.

- Encourage your high risk employees to call their health care provider if they become ill.

Prepare for employee absences and continuing essential business functions



Employers should plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace while encouraging those sick to stay home.

- Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff members are absent.
- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations.
- Consult with Steuben County Public Health for further guidance.

Signs and Symptoms of Influenza

Both H1N1 and seasonal influenza can be deadly. Symptoms of influenza are respiratory in nature and include: a fever (100°F), cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, achiness, headache, chills and fatigue. Novel H1N1 occasionally causes diarrhea and vomiting.

References

- <http://www.cdc.gov>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa>
- <http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/h1n1/>
- <http://www.steubencony.org/phns.html>

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