

HEALTHY HABITS AT WORK

IDENTIFY

Illness can happen at any time of the year, but especially during the cold winter months employers may see a spike in workers getting sick. To avoid catching a virus, this toolbox talk is designed to equip you with a series of tips and tricks to keep you healthy.

COMMUNICATE AND CONTROL

Stay home when sick

When able to do so, employers should encourage workers to stay home when sick and not require a doctor's note. Asking for a doctor's note can have negative/discouraging effects — forcing workers to visit the doctor's office may spread germs further, while not spending time resting ultimately delays their return to work. If a worker chooses to attend work, practice healthy habits to limit the spread of germs causing illness.

Cover your cough

If you're coughing and sneezing, don't spread the germs by coughing into your hands. Instead, cough or sneeze into your elbow — this small gesture prevents the spread of germs because very few things actually come in contact with your elbow.

Wash your hands frequently

The number one preventative for spreading cold and flu germs is to wash your hands. If possible, always wash your hands using warm water and lots of lathered soap for 30 seconds to remove any lingering dirt or germs.

In construction, we don't always have wash facilities at our disposal. The site should have alcohol based hand sanitizer available for workers to clean their hands.

In between handwashes, be mindful of what you touch — doorknobs, shared work tools, key boards, etc., in order to prevent the spread of germs sanitize these items with a solution of 70 per cent alcohol in a spray bottle. These habits should be practiced by both ill and healthy workers in the workplace. Preventing the spread of germs requires a collective effort.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth

To protect yourself from cold and flu germs, be diligent with not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, which are vulnerable areas for bacteria to enter the body and attack your immune system.

Practice healthy habits

During cold and flu season, be sure to drink lots of fluids, get plenty of rest, and eat lots of fruit and vegetables.

Demonstrate

Educate your workers on healthy habits at work and ensure that anyone who is at home sick can rest and recover without stressing about work.

THE QUIZ

1. If you cough or sneeze, direct it into:
 - a) Your fist
 - b) Your palm
 - c) Your elbow
 - d) No where — let those germs fly
2. What parts of the body are most vulnerable to bacteria?
 - a) Ears, eyes, nose
 - b) Eyes, nose, mouth
 - c) Feet, hands, mouth
 - d) Hands, nose, eyes
3. What “healthy habits” will help prevent you from getting sick?
 - a) Getting lots of rest
 - b) Drinking plenty of fluids
 - c) Eating lots of fruits and vegetables
 - d) All of the above
4. What is the correct way to wash your hands? (Circle all that apply.)
 - a) Just get them wet
 - b) No soap, just water
 - c) 30 seconds with plenty of soap and water
 - d) Use hand sanitizer if water is unavailable
5. If you’re sick you should stay home and rest:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____

ANSWERS:

1. c; 2. b; 3. d; 4. c and d; 5. TRUE