

Managing & Preventing

Stop the Spread of Cold and Flu



Good health habits may help protect you against the flu. The resources below will help you learn about steps you can take to protect yourself and others from flu and help stop the spread of germs.

The Facts:

Spring might be just around the corner, but cold and flu season is now peaking in Canada. The sniffing, the coughing and the sneezing can be heard across the office, and you just can't seem to be able to escape it. Between 10% and 25% of Canadians get the flu each year. Although the best prevention method against the virus is to stay home, 67% of workers have admitted to coming into the office while being sick. Cold and flu is easily spread when people are indoors, is transferred to others through physical contact with people or contaminated hard surfaces, or through the air in the workplace. Within 2 to 4 hours, 40 to 60 percent of surfaces in the office, such as such as coffeepots, copy-machine buttons, door handles and fridge doors, are contaminated with the infectious virus. The virus can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours.

When an infected person coughs or sneezes, their cold or influenza virus becomes airborne and survives for approximately one hour in the air. The flu virus can travel 161 km/h and at a distance of up to 12 feet in the air. If another person inhales the air carrying the cold or flu droplets, they can catch the virus.

There are many actions you can take to prevent the spread of cold and flu viruses at work.

Prevention:

As 60% of office illnesses are caused by dirty surfaces, cleaning and disinfecting is the best way to prevent germ transmission. Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes should be available in the office during cold and flu season.

Ways to stop the spread of germs during cold and flu season:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Avoid close contact
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces, focusing on high touch areas
- Wash hands (20 seconds) regularly with soap and water
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue

The average desk harbours 400x more bacteria than toilet seats

A cell phone has 18x more bacteria than a public restroom



Keyboard: Up to 3,295 germs per sq. in.

Desk Surfaces: Up to 10 million bacteria

