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Best Practices To Reduce The Spread of Viruses In The Workplace

Keeping the office clean and free of nasty germs and bacteria should be part of every employees' responsibilities. Reduce the domino effect of workplace illness by preventing the spread of germs.

Remember that even if you aren't feeling sick, you can still be carrying harmful germs and bacteria with you. Use these tips throughout the year for a cleaner and safer office.

Cleaning Practices

Cleaning vs. Sanitizing vs. Disinfection

Cleaning cleans the dirt/debris. Sanitizing reduces the number of germs. Disinfection kills germs.

Dust & clean your desk areas Dust with a vacuum to reduce accumulation. Clean surfaces with soap and water. Having a messy or dirty desk gives germs and bacteria a great place to live. Inhaling dust can also lower your immune system making it more difficult for you to fight off viruses of any kind.

Clean food consumption spaces Wash hands and area where food is eaten before and after consumption. Keep crumbs away from technology (keyboards, mice, phones, etc.). Clean up food/drink spills thoroughly and immediately. Keep food in sealed containers and beware of mold produced by spills and outdated food..



Disinfect your desk Consistently disinfecting your workspace is a great way to eliminate germs. Desks and the items on it have high potential for contamination.

In fact, the average desk harbors 400 times more bacteria than the average toilet seat. Using an antibacterial wipe or cleaner on your desk, computer, keyboard, headset and mouse before and after your shift will help keep your space germ free and ensure you are not spreading germs to the next user.

Disinfectant products including wipes Use as directed on the label. **DO NOT DRY** the surface immediately following use. Allow the surface to dry on its own or wait for the time listed to kill germs before wiping. The drying process kills bacteria and viruses.

Avoid hot spots or disinfect them regularly Many bacteria and viruses can last on surfaces for up to 7 days. Items such as the fridge, door handles, printers, coffee pots, etc. are heavily used by all employees and often forgotten in the cleaning/disinfectant cycle. This makes it easier to spread germs from coworker to coworker. If possible, avoid contact with these hot spots for your best chance at staying healthy. If that's not possible, make an effort to grab these items with a tissue, avoid touching your face after contact, and wash your hands as soon as possible.

Educate others Sure, you might be known as the office "germaphobe" for a day or two but educating other co-workers about germs in the workplace will make a huge impact on office health. Lead by example by taking the initiative to disinfect shared workspaces and appliances. It takes a team effort to keep your office clean and germ-free.

General Health Practices

Wash your hands Rinse with clean, running water (warm or cold), use soap (regular or antibacterial), scrub hands, fingers, fingernails, back of hands and wrists for a minimum of 20 seconds, rinse with clean, running water (warm or cold). Dry with disposable paper product or air dry if possible.



Avoid touching your face Try to refrain from touching your eyes, nose, and mouth throughout the day. This causes germs to spread anything you touch and increases the likelihood of picking up germs yourself.

Keep your distance Avoid close contact with your co-workers. Keep 4' – 6' apart if possible.

Hydrate Drinking fluids is crucial to staying healthy and maintaining the function of every system in your body, including your heart, brain, and muscles. Fluids carry nutrients to your cells, increasing your immune systems abilities to fight off infection and germs.

While hydrating, consider your vessel. Simple rinsing may not remove a colleague's germs. And the outside surface of the mug/bottle could become contaminated by their hands.

- Avoid using communal mugs/bottles unless they can be washed daily in a dishwasher.
- Wash your dedicated mug/bottle at least once a day. Water is not sterile, and bacteria will build up over time.
- Get a mug/bottle with smooth surfaces so they're easy to wash (preferably in a dishwasher).
- Don't share your mug/bottles.

Sleep, Exercise & Eat Well When your basic wellness needs are met, your body functions at its best. Moderate exercise activity will improve your overall fitness, which can help boost your immune system and defend your body against infections. Eating a well-balanced diet will help give your body the fuel it needs to fight off germs. It is also important to get enough sleep each night. Research shows that consistently getting seven to eight hours of sleep will boost your immune system, manage weight loss, and help retain memory.



Keep hand sanitizer at your desk Use hand sanitizer (min. 60% alcohol content) before and after using shared office supplies and appliances. This keep you from spreading your germs and help fight off any germs from your co-workers. Be sure to moisturize to limit the drying effects of the sanitizer that can cause cracks in your skin, a perfect place for germs to enter your system.

Never cover your mouth or nose with your hands Whether you are sick or not, always cough or sneeze into a tissue or your inner arm. Sneezing and coughing into your hands causes germs to spread like wildfire through everything you touch throughout the day.



Take your Vitamins Vitamin C is well known for its role in supporting a healthy immune system. It is known to shorten the life of colds, protect the body against infection, protect your cells from damage, and more. Try taking a Vitamin C immune support tablet such as Emergen-C or Airborne to boost your daily immune system. Vitamin D also helps our immune system stay balanced during cold and flu season. It is known to increase immune cell function, lining your lungs to fight off viruses. Consider spending time in the sunlight or taking a supplement to increase your levels of Vitamin-D.

