Common Cold Meeting Kit



WHAT’S AT STAKE

SAFETY TALK FOR COLDS

The common cold and the flu are respiratory system illnesses that are easily passed from person to person in the workplace. Often, these viral illnesses are spread by sneezes and coughs that send droplets containing viruses into the air to be inhaled by others. These viruses can be picked up from shared workplace objects as well, including telephones, copy machines and doorknobs.

WHAT’ S THE DANGER

THE COLD

Colds are minor infections of the nose and throat caused by more than 200 different viruses.

Colds are highly contagious. They most often spread when droplets of fluid that contain a cold virus are transferred by touch. These droplets may also be inhaled.

COMMON COLD SYMPTOMS

Between one and three days after a cold virus enters the body, symptoms start developing, such as: Runny nose, Congestion, Sneezing, Weakened senses of taste and smell, Scratchy throat, Cough.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF HAVING A COLD

Lower energy- One of the biggest effects the common cold has is robbing you of your energy. Your body is working overtime to fight the cold along with trying to sustain all the regular bodily functions so naturally you will not be at a normal energy level.

Decreased focus- When you are not feeling your best you cannot fully focus on the task at hand. Whether you are thinking about how you do not feel well or sneezing nonstop, your focus on a work task will be negatively affected.

Lower morale- Morale goes a long way in working productively and safely especially as part of a team. When you or the others are sick around you, everyone’s mood can be affected.

COMPLICATIONS OF A COLD

Colds get better within a few days to weeks, whether or not a person takes medication. However, a cold virus can pave the way for other infections to invade the body, including sinus or ear infections and acute bronchitis. A common complication is a sinus infection with a prolonged cough.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

COMMON COLD PREVENTION

Preventing the spread of the common cold comes down to a few basic principles.

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water.**
- **Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.**
- **Stay away from individuals who are sick.**
- **Disinfect commonly touched surfaces.**

Prevention/Solution

One of the most important steps you can take to avoid the spread of colds and the flu is encouraging hand washing. Everyone in your workplace should wash his hands before and after using the bathroom, before eating or preparing food, and after sneezing, coughing or blowing his nose. Washing with soap and water for at least 15 seconds may help to prevent illness, but using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer may help as well. You can also help to prevent widespread workplace illness by encouraging employees to cough or sneeze towards the floor or into the crook of their arms. Alternatively, they may cough or sneeze into a tissue or paper towel and then wash their hands afterward. In addition, a policy for when sick employees should stay home and encouraging flu vaccination may further help to prevent the spread of colds and the flu.

A healthy workplace is in everyone’s best interests. Here’s how to help:

1. Get your flu shot annually and early.
2. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
3. Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
4. Wash your hands—frequently—with plenty of soap and warm water.
5. Keep common surfaces sanitized.
6. Distance yourself socially during flu season.
7. Be kind to your immune system.
8. Stay home if you’re sick.

FINAL WORD

Most of us can battle through a common cold with no major issues. That being said, it is still important to try to prevent having a cold or spreading it to others. When you are feeling under the weather realize the effects it has on you and your work. Fight the urge to cut corners or take shortcuts especially when it comes to working safely when you are sick.