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Cold and flu prevention in the workplace

Information for employees

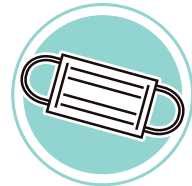
Cold and flu viruses are highly contagious, this period begins immediately after infection. In the early stage of infection, a person with a cold or flu does not have symptoms like blocked nose or coughing. Thus, they are unaware that they are sick and may infect others unknowingly. Influenza or flu is typically contagious for 24 hours before symptoms appear and continues to be contagious for up to seven days. Common colds are typically most contagious for the initial 2-3 days of infection but may be passed on to others up to a week later.

Symptoms of a cold and flu include:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Blocked nose
- Mild temperature
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Sneezing
- Aches and pains

What to be aware of

- Getting a flu shot is most effective when administered before the flu season starts, usually around autumn and winter season.
- Cold and flu are highly contagious and can spread when infected people cough or sneeze in the workplace. Practice good cough and sneeze etiquette by covering your mouth or nose when coughing or sneezing (preferably with a tissue which is disposed of immediately) and wash your hands afterwards.
- Ensure you have a good supply of hygiene products at hand to help prevent the spread of cold and flu, including tissues, a dustbin, soap, disposable wipes and disinfectant hand gel.
- Wash your hands regularly throughout the day. Avoid touching your mouth and nose with unclean hands which may harbor cold and flu viruses.
- Shared surfaces and equipment in the workplace should be cleaned regularly to ensure cold and flu viruses are removed, such as door knobs, handles, keyboard, telephone buttons, microwave handles and buttons.
- Avoid close contact with people who are known or suspected to be ill whenever possible.
- Wash your hands as soon as possible after skin contact with an infected individual occurs.
- Articles contaminated or potentially contaminated with cold and flu viruses should be disposed of or quarantined for disinfection immediately.
- Go home immediately if you begin to feel sick at work and stay away until you have recovered and are no longer contagious.



Staying healthy to fight cold and flu infection

Antibiotics will not cure cold or flu, and rather than helping you feel better they could cause harmful side effects. Over-the-counter medicines can help relieve symptoms; your local community pharmacist can offer you help and advice.

Paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin, these can help reduce symptoms such as sore throat, fevers, headaches, aches and pains.

Rest

Get plenty of rest until you feel better and are well enough to return to a normal level of activity.

Eat healthily and drink plenty

Drink plenty of fluids, preferably water to prevent dehydration. Eat a healthy diet which includes five portions of fruit or vegetables a day.

Avoid stress

Stress can prolong your bodies recovery from even minor illnesses.

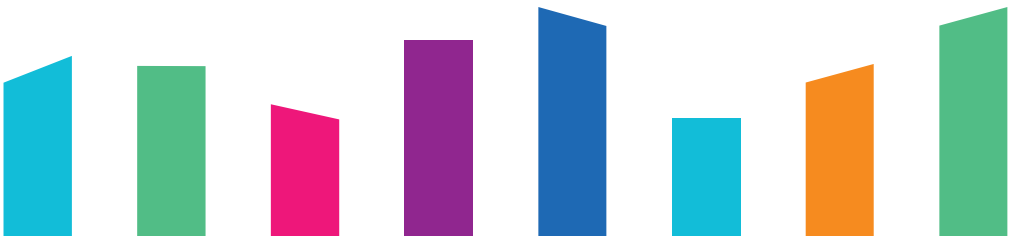
Home remedies

Honey and lemon can help to soothe sore throats and ease coughs. Steam inhalation can help blocked noses.

Stop smoking

By stopping or cutting down smoking you can improve your cough which is one of the main symptoms of a flu, and also reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke or lung cancer.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for common cold. Our bodies naturally fight the infection, and over the counter medication also help relieve the symptoms.



For further information, please call us on

020 3993 9834

www.doctorsclinicgroup.com



Registered address:
3 Dorset Rise, London, EC4Y 8EN

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