

MONTHLY SAFETY AWARENESS DISCUSSION GUIDE



Infectious Diseases - Influenza and COVID-19

Introductory Comments

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide.

Instructions:
Use this Safety Toolbox Talk to spark discussion within the employee group. Test knowledge retention with the associated quiz.

Some basic hygiene (see www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm) and social distancing precautions that can be implemented in every workplace include the following:

- Encourage sick employees to stay at home.
- Encourage your employees to wash their hands frequently with soap and water or with hand sanitizer if there is no soap or water available.
- Also, encourage your employees to avoid touching their noses, mouths, and eyes.
- Encourage your employees to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or to cough and sneeze into their upper sleeves if tissues are not available.
- All employees should wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer after they cough, sneeze or blow their noses.
- Employees should avoid close contact with their coworkers and customers (maintain a separation of at least 6 feet). They should avoid shaking hands and always wash their hands after contact with others. Even if employees wear gloves, they should wash their hands upon removal of the gloves in case their hand(s) became contaminated during the removal process.
- Keep work surfaces, telephones, computer equipment and other frequently touched surfaces and office equipment clean.
- Discourage your employees from using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment.
- Minimize situations where groups of people are crowded together, such as in a meeting.
- Use e-mail, phones and text messages to communicate with each other.
- When meetings are necessary, avoid close contact by keeping a separation of at least 6 feet, where possible, and assure that there is proper ventilation in the meeting room. Reducing or eliminating unnecessary social interactions can be very effective in controlling the spread of infectious diseases.
- Reconsider all situations that permit or require employees, customers, and visitors (including family members) to enter the workplace.
- Promote healthy lifestyles, including good nutrition, exercise, and smoking cessation. A person's overall health impacts their body's immune system and can affect their ability to fight off, or recover from, an infectious disease.

Meeting Starter Questions

- What is a pandemic?
- Can you identify some forms of basic hygiene and social distancing precautions?
- Should we schedule in-person meetings?





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Critical Safety Points

When is the flu season in the United States?

In the United States, flu season occurs in the fall and winter. While influenza viruses circulate year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February, but activity can last as late as May. The overall health impact (e.g., infections, hospitalizations, and deaths) of a flu season varies from season to season. CDC collects, compiles, and analyzes information on influenza activity year-round in the United States and produces FluView, a weekly surveillance report, and FluView Interactive, which allows for more in-depth exploration of influenza surveillance data. The Weekly U.S. Influenza Summary Update is updated each week from October through May. Reference source <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Preventative Steps:

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Getting a flu vaccine during 2020-2021 will be more important than ever.
- Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19, but they will reduce the burden of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths on the health care system and conserve scarce medical resources for the care of people with COVID-19.
- CDC estimates that last season, fewer than half of Americans got a flu vaccine and at least 410,000 people were hospitalized from flu. Increased vaccination coverage would reduce that burden.
- Most flu vaccines protect against the four flu viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get annual flu vaccine by the end of October.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older. Many people at higher risk from flu also seem to be at higher risk from COVID-19.
- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for people at higher risk to keep from spreading flu to them. This is especially true for people who work in long-term care facilities, which are home to many of the people most vulnerable to flu and COVID-19.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for infants should be vaccinated instead.

Common Flu Sign and Symptoms - Flu signs and symptoms usually come on suddenly. People who are sick with flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose





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- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

What should I do if I get sick?

Contact your Medical provider

What are the emergency warning signs of flu? People experiencing these warning signs should obtain medical care right away.

In Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish lips or face
- Ribs pulling in with each breath
- Chest pain
- Severe muscle pain (child refuses to walk)
- Dehydration (no urine for 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears when crying)
- Not alert or interacting when awake
- Seizures
- Fever above 104°F
- In children less than 12 weeks, any fever
- Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions

In Adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Persistent dizziness, confusion, inability to arouse
- Seizures
- Not urinating
- Severe muscle pain
- Severe weakness or unsteadiness
- Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions

Basic Precautions for All Work Activities:





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The CDC strongly recommends that you provide the seasonal flu vaccine to workers and encourage them to get vaccinated. Vaccination is the most important way to prevent the spread of the flu. Encourage sick workers to stay home. Not everyone who has the flu will have a fever. Other symptoms could include a runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. Develop flexible leave policies that encourage workers to stay home, without penalty, if they are sick. Discuss other human resource policies with staff, including administrative leave transfer between employees, pay policy for sick leave, childcare options, and what to do when ill during travel. Reference source: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Additional links for helpful references include:

City of Memphis Covid-19 What to Do Fact Sheet

https://totalrewards.memphistn.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COM-Covid-What-to-Do-Fact-Sheet_110220-003FINAL.pdf

City of Memphis Temporary Coronavirus Leave and Travel Policy PM-46-04

https://totalrewards.memphistn.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/City-of-Memphis-Covid-19-Policy_PM4604_110220-003FINAL.pdf





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Employee Name:	Signature:
Division:	Date:
Instructor:	Score:

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Question 1: Vaccination is the most important way to prevent the spread of the flu.

- TRUE FALSE

Question 2: There are basic hygiene and social distancing precautions.

- TRUE FALSE

Question 3: The CDC recommends that workers who have a fever and respiratory symptoms stay at home until 24 hours after their fever ends (100 degrees Fahrenheit [37.8 degrees Celsius] or lower), without the use of medication.

- TRUE FALSE

Question 4: Anyone that has the flu will always have fever?

- TRUE FALSE

Question 5: Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19.

- TRUE FALSE

Quiz Answer Key:

1. TRUE
2. TRUE
3. TRUE
4. FALSE
5. TRUE