

# Action Steps to Keep Your Business and Employees Healthy

Regardless of the size or type of your business, planning and taking action *now* can help protect your business and employees from the flu.

## Plan Now

- ▶ **Review your current pandemic flu plan or develop a new plan.** Involve your employees in development and review of the plan. Share the plan and policies with your employees.
- ▶ **Engage your state and local health department** to confirm channels of communication and methods for dissemination of local outbreak information.
- ▶ **Consider ways to allow sick employees to stay home** without fear of losing their jobs.
- ▶ **Develop flexible leave policies** to allow employees to stay home to care for sick family members or for children, if schools dismiss students or child care programs close.
- ▶ **Share best practices with other businesses in your community.** Work with companies in your supply chain as well as chambers of commerce and local associations to improve response efforts.
- ▶ **Add a “widget” or “button” to your company** Web page or employee Web site so employees can access the latest information on the flu:
  - [www.cdc.gov/widgets](http://www.cdc.gov/widgets)
  - [www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Campaigns/H1N1/buttons.html](http://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Campaigns/H1N1/buttons.html)
  - [www.hhs.gov/web/library/hhsfluwidgets.html](http://www.hhs.gov/web/library/hhsfluwidgets.html)
  - [www.flu.gov/news/socialmedia](http://www.flu.gov/news/socialmedia)
- ▶ **Purchase supplies** such as tissues, soap, and alcohol-based hand rubs to encourage healthful habits in the workplace.
- ▶ **Plan for how business can continue if many employees must stay home.** Designate and train other employees in the event someone becomes sick to make sure you can continue your critical functions.



# Take Steps Now

Take steps now and continue during the flu season to help protect the health of your employees.

- ▶ **Encourage all employees to get vaccinated for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu.** Also encourage employees who are at higher risk for complications from 2009 H1N1 flu to receive the vaccine. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include: children younger than 5 years old, but especially children younger than 2 years old; people aged 65 years or older; pregnant women; adults and children who have asthma, neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions; chronic lung disease; heart disease; blood disorders; endocrine disorders, such as diabetes; kidney, liver, and metabolic disorders; weakened immune system due to disease or medication; and people younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy. See CDC's information on [higher risk for flu complications](#).
- ▶ **Provide resources and a work environment that promotes hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.** Provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, and alcohol-based hand rubs. Offer education on hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes in an easy-to-understand format and in appropriate languages. Visit [Flu.gov](#) to find tools businesses can use.
- ▶ **Advise all employees to stay home if they are sick** until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). Make sure fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- ▶ **Employees who get sick at work should go home as soon as possible.** If the employee cannot go home immediately, he or she should be separated from other employees.
- ▶ **Encourage sick employees at higher risk of complications from flu to contact their health care provider as soon as possible.** It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early to treat flu in people who are very sick (for example people who are in the hospital) and people who are sick with flu and have a greater chance of getting serious flu complications. Other people may also be treated with antiviral drugs by their health care provider this season
- ▶ **Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact** with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas. Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended.
- ▶ **Provide information to employees overseas** about what to do if they become sick.

## Take Additional Steps if Flu Conditions are More Severe

The flu may become more severe and additional steps may be necessary to slow the spread of flu and maintain a healthy workforce.

- ▶ **Conduct active screening of employees when they arrive at work.** Ask all employees about symptoms such as fever, cough, runny nose, muscle aches, and sore throat during the previous 24 hours. Employees who have flu-like symptoms should be asked to go home. Continue to advise employees to check for any signs of illness before coming to work each day.
- ▶ **Extend the time sick employees stay home to at least 7 days.** People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away, even if they feel better sooner.
- ▶ **Try to change work duties, workspace, or work schedules for employees who are at higher risk for flu complications** to reduce the possibility of getting sick at work. If this cannot be done, allow these employees to work from home, or stay home if feasible.
- ▶ **Plan to minimize face-to-face contact between employees.** Consider strategies, such as using e-mail, Web sites, and teleconferences, canceling large meetings and gatherings, and encouraging flexible work arrangements (telecommuting or flexible work hours) to reduce the number of employees who must be at the work site at the same time or in one specific location.
- ▶ **Provide guidance to employees who are traveling overseas on what to do if they become sick.** Also provide information about possible travel delays, health screenings, and other activities targeted towards travelers.

### For more information:

- ▶ **Visit: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)**
- ▶ **Contact CDC 24 Hours/Every Day**
  - 1 (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636)
  - TTY: (888) 232-6348
  - [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)

