

SAFETY & WELLNESS

SHORTS



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UPCOMING TRAINING

For a list of upcoming trainings visit our website at www.cciservices.com. Upcoming trainings are listed on the far right hand side of the page.

Check out the new CIS Video Library on our Member Portal at www.cciservices.com/webportal. Browse the catalogue and request videos online!

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Please use this newsletter for safety meetings or to distribute to your employees with our compliments.

State Officials' Advice: "If it's wet and not yours, don't touch it!"

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are predicting up to 40% of our workforce will be impacted this winter by the flu. The Swine Flu (Novel H1N1) will hit at the same time as our usual winter cold and flu, compounding the impact at work. There is much being done now to communicate the facts and encourage public entities to have a plan in place to deal with a reduced and/or sick workforce.



SWINE FLU – 101 (THE SHORT VERSION)

Swine Flu is unique in that it is a strain that hasn't been seen since the mid-1950's. This is why it is hitting the young and middle-age work groups harder than older populations who may have been exposed at a young age.

Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. These are regular "flu-like" symptoms, but be aware that you can be contagious for up to 24-48 hours before these major symptoms occur.

The flu, including Swine Flu, is spread through the droplets that are expelled by coughing or sneezing. The droplets can fly 3-6 feet, but they are heavy and will drop towards the ground and land on things below. The disease will be live for 1-2 hours depending on the conditions in that area.

You are encouraged to get your seasonal flu shot as soon as possible. It will help defend against seasonal flu. It may also lessen the seriousness of Swine Flu.

If you are in the recommended group to receive the Swine Flu vaccine when it is available, you may be getting two doses, which would make three flu shots or nasal mist treatments. The recommended groups include:

Health care workers and emergency medical responders, pregnant women, people caring for infants under 6-months, young adults up to age 24, people 25-64 with underlying medical conditions.

PERSONAL ILLNESS PREVENTION

General prevention recommendations for not only Swine Flu, but seasonal flu and colds are all the same:

1. IF IT'S WET AND NOT YOURS, DON'T TOUCH IT!
2. WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY.
3. COVER YOUR COUGH. COUGH INTO THE BEND OF YOUR ARM, A TISSUE OR DOWN YOUR SHIRT, IF YOU HAVE TO. DON'T COUGH INTO YOUR HANDS; IT WILL ONLY SPREAD THE DISEASE.
4. STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK.
5. GET YOUR SEASONAL FLU SHOT
6. DEVELOP A FAMILY PREPAREDNESS PLAN.
7. PLAN FOR EXTENDED OR MULTIPLE FAMILY MEMBER ILLNESSES, SCHOOL AND/OR BUSINESS CLOSURES.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREPARE

Stay informed about the Swine Flu.

Coordinate/appoint a single source of employee "Swine Flu" information for your entity.

Send out regular communications and updates about Swine Flu to employees or conduct on-going training such as, brown bag information sessions for concerned employees.

State Officials' Advice (continued)

Review and update FMLA/OFLA (or other leave) policies. Make sure employees understand your entity leave policies and their available leave balances.

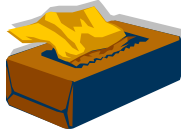
Be clear about your entity's expectations regarding coming to work sick.

Discuss good sanitation and prevention practices for employees.

Provide bleach or other antibacterial wipes at front desk/reception areas, or to others who regularly conduct public business.

Consider the placement of antibacterial hand gels in lobby or other public areas.

Make sure there are plenty of tissue boxes around to catch flying flu droplets.



Provide State or Local Health Department (Cover your Cough) posters in public or lobby areas.

Identify your "high exposure-risk" jobs; evaluate the Personal Protective Equipment and any other protective measures available. Provide training on universal precautions/hand hygiene and healthy work practices.

- Valerie Saiki, Risk Management Consultant

Resources

- OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for an Influenza Pandemic can be found at: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3327pandemic.pdf>
- State of Oregon, Department of Human Resources/Public Health: www.flu.oregon.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.flu.gov

2009-10 Flu Shot Program for CIS-Medical Plan Members

Kaiser Permanente and Regence BCBS will provide **free** flu shots to members with CIS medical coverage. Flu shot participants must have their medical ID card available to provide proof of medical coverage.



- Kaiser Permanente members must receive the flu shot at a Kaiser Permanente Clinic.
- Regence BCBS members must receive a flu shot through community clinics (e.g., Bi-Mart, Safeway, etc.) or an employer-sponsored worksite clinic. If a shot is provided by a medical provider, regular plan benefits apply. This means that you may be charged for an office visit and that plan deductibles may apply.
- **IMPORTANT:** If you plan on receiving a shot at either a community or work-site based clinic, the provider must be an approved provider listed on the Regence Provider List. *Regence will not reimburse vaccination costs administered by a non-Regence approved provider.* The provider list is available at: <http://www.or.regence.com/employer/flushotprogram2009.html>.
- Note: Even though parental consent may be required for members aged 13 – 17, not all immunization providers will administer a flu shot to individuals under the age of 18. In these cases, the individual may need to receive a vaccination from their healthcare provider.

Watch for information from your employer or your health insurance company on coverage and availability for both regular and Swine Flu shots.

Low-Cost and Simple Ergonomics in Lean Times

Ergonomics. It sounds expensive and complex, doesn't it? It doesn't have to be!

Many physical problems related to work can be resolved with low-cost (even no-cost), common-sense solutions. In fact, problem solving may cost you little more than time.

Sometimes LACK OF TIME is the biggest problem. Don't let a little discomfort turn into a big pain, however. Dealing with small problems early, can spare time, injury and expense later on.

Let's take the mystery out of the word "ergonomics" before we talk about simple, inexpensive ergonomic improvements.

Ergonomics is about the fit of the job to the person (not the other way around).

This means carefully considering individual physical differences and abilities in relation to work stations and job tasks.

The goal of ergonomics is to help us maintain a neutral and unstrained body and joint position. Proper ergonomics allow us to perform tasks comfortably and safely, minimizing strain and injury. Workers operating in a comfortable, safe manner also report increased job satisfaction and improved productivity.

One of the earliest signs of a poor ergonomic fit at work is physical discomfort. Symptoms include body aches, headaches, neck or shoulder stiffness, elbow or wrist pain. Most of us don't need to see a doctor or hire an ergonomist to know that there is a problem. Our bodies usually tell us when

something is wrong. We just need to learn to pay attention to what our bodies are communicating.

STEP ONE– Boost awareness

Awareness of the problem is the first step toward resolving it. Raising awareness of our own comfort and fitness to a task is



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Low Cost and Simple Ergonomics in Lean Times (continued)

the best way to keep problems and costs of ergonomics to a minimum.

STEP TWO – Take time to analyze

What are we doing (or not doing) that may be causing symptoms of discomfort?

- What tasks are you are performing and how are you actually doing it?
- Are you able to maintain a fairly neutral spine position with your arms and hands close to your body?
- Do you frequently maintain awkward body positions? Are you sitting or standing for prolonged periods? Are you leaning forward, reaching overhead or beyond arms length in any direction, pushing or pulling forcefully, or lifting and/or carrying heavy items? Can you associate your discomfort with the physical activity?



STEP THREE – Be creative

Think about what it would take to maintain a neutral and unstrained body position while performing job tasks. Then, brainstorm on possible solutions.

Ask others for input. You may be surprised by the help you get from inviting others to help problem solve.

STEP FOUR – Experiment

Go ahead and try out an idea. Remember, it may feel awkward at first to change your work station or adjust the way you do a task. Give yourself time to get used to the changes. It may take a couple of weeks to determine whether a change helps or not.

What are some ideas for low-cost or no-cost ergonomic solutions?

- Train yourself to keep all of your body parts in a neutral position.
 - Roll up a towel for lower-back support, while seated.
 - Use old phone books to raise your computer monitor. The screen height should be just below eye level.
 - Position the monitor 18-30 inches from your eyes.
 - Make sure your feet are on the floor. Use those old phone books to raise your feet if you sit too high.
 - Purchase or fashion some kind of document holder to place documents close to either side of the screen, or in a position between the monitor and keyboard
 - Consider purchasing a telephone head set if you spend much time on the phone.
- Rearrange your work area.
 - Place frequently-used items within easy reach.
 - Avoid reaching and lifting in combination. Move heavy

items off that high shelf and place them at waist level.

- Don't reach across your body, stretching and twisting, for frequently-used objects such as, the phone.
- Practice safety when lifting and carrying.
 - Avoid lifting and carrying heavy items. Ask for assistance.
 - Limit repetitive lifting or use carts or hand trucks, when possible. Ask vendors to package in smaller, lighter quantities.
 - Hold items close to your body and use your legs, not your back, when lifting heavier items.
 - Keep your spine in an upright and straight position when lifting something heavy. Avoid lifting while in an awkward position.
 - Find a way to store heavier items higher than ground level. The safest zone to lift from is between the knees and mid-chest.
- Take regular mini-breaks to change positions, stretch, and move around.

By the way, the concept of ergonomics is not just about the workplace. It is about how we physically interact with places, things and activities throughout our lives. It makes sense to apply the same individual "ergonomic" assessment to activities such as, washing dishes, doing laundry, cleaning out the garage, working in the shop, gardening, driving, and grocery shopping.

A helpful link for more information on do-it-yourself ergonomics is <http://www.orosha.org/subjects/ergonomics.html>.

- Moira Przybylowski,
Workers' Compensation Return-To-Work Consultant

(Sources: *Office Ergonomics* by Jan Noland, Occupational Solutions 1999)

9th CIS Annual Meeting & Risk Management Conference "Reap What You Sow"



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