

Flu Season

It's that time of year again, which means thousands of Canadians will be or have been struck with that debilitating ailment we call the flu, or if not the flu, horrid colds are invading the workplace.

According to the Canadian Chamber Report, "one in four employees in Canada will be affected by influenza this winter" In order to prevent your bottom-line from getting sick this season, I suggest that you:

- Post notices in washrooms and shared kitchens reminding people to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly
- Encourage everyone to keep sinks, fridges, countertops and tables clean in these common areas.
- Avoid hand-to-hand contact as this is how viruses and colds are spread
- Encourage employees to stay at home when they are ill so as to not spread their germs which are released in sneezes and coughs. Remember that sick employees at work are not productive employees.
- Remind employees of the hazards of smoking, which can actually make cold symptoms worse

Do you have a cold or the flu? The College of Family Physicians of Canada describe the difference as follows:

"A cold often starts with feeling tired, sneezing, coughing and a runny nose. You may not have a fever or you may run a low fever - just a degree or two higher than usual. You may also have muscle aches, a scratchy or sore throat, watery eyes and a headache. As the cold worsens, your nasal mucus may turn from thin and watery to yellow and thick. Your symptoms may vary with each cold. A cold usually lasts three or four days but can last up to 10 days.

The flu, which is a nickname for the influenza virus, starts suddenly and hits hard. Your fever may go as high as 40C (105F). You'll probably feel weak and tired, and have a dry cough, a runny nose, chills, muscle aches, severe headache and a sore throat. The fever may last for three to five days. After the flu goes away, you may still feel weak and tired or keep coughing for up to three weeks.

If healthy eating habits, exercise, play, relaxation AND following the above tips still don't stop those germs from coming your way, REMEMBER what the doctor ordered: get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. This too, shall pass.

Stay healthy and be happy,

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