

Flu, H1N1, Colds, Pneumonia & other Infections

Worksite Action Plan – Best Practice Tips, Tools & Support Resources

Edition 9.2 – Last Update: 10.26.09

A. Have you been wondering...

- ☑ Does H1N1 flu “news” seem to drive fears and over-reactions? What’s accurate?
- ☑ Is getting a vaccine the only way to avoid it?
- ☑ What about the seasonal flu?
- ☑ Who should get these vaccines? Why? Where? Any other considerations?
- ☑ What does every employee and family need to know?



What can any employer *easily* do to help every employee and his/her family:

- ◆ Prevent the spread of the flu(s) at work, at home and elsewhere;
- ◆ Better handle fevers, coughs, dehydration and other symptoms of the flu and other common illnesses;
- ◆ Avoid waiting too long to see a doctor – which can make problems more severe, difficult to treat, longer to recover from and more costly;
- ◆ Avoid unnecessary visits for symptoms and illnesses that are self-resolving and need the right care at home;
- ◆ Learn updated guidelines on prevention, when to call or see a doctor and home treatment?

What tactics and resources are recommended?

What’s the business case?

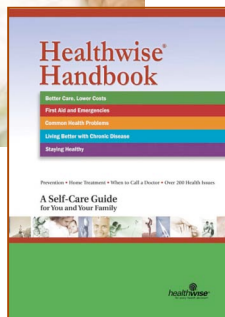
Budgeting guidelines?

Who can help with training, communications, flu shots and benefit/reimbursement details?



B. Preventing the Flu – *Did you know?*

- ☑ The annual flu shot is designed to target 2-4 predicted strains the flu for each new year.
- ☑ Overall, 70-90% of those receiving flu shots will not get the flu – **IF** the flu shot is well matched for the strains that actually do occur.
- ☑ If not well matched, more than 30% getting a flu shot can still get the flu.
- ☑ Many people who do not get a flu shot do not get the flu. Other actions to kill, avoid and resist germs help and are essential.
- ☑ Other proven tactics for each person include:
 - Keep hands clean – wash at strategic times;
 - Keep common surfaces clean;
 - Eat certain foods; AND
 - Take over 30 other actions to build strong germ resistance and break the chain-of-infection of flu, H1N1, pneumonia and over 25 OTHER common infections.



C. Handling the Flu, Colds & ... – *Did you know?*

- ☑ The flu can share some of the same symptoms of colds, other respiratory infections, food poisoning and other conditions.
- ☑ Many people wonder about if and when to call or see a doctor.
- ☑ Without up-to-date guidelines, some visits are often unnecessary while others are too delayed (making things worse – e.g., minor flu or cold becoming pneumonia).
- ☑ Over 30 years of research shows, on average, that **of every 100 families using their *Healthwise Handbook***:
 - They avoid 112-606 or more unnecessary doctor & ER visits each year; AND
 - They get care earlier for 17-60 or more problems each year needing that care – e.g., respiratory infections, de-hydration, other flu complications; AND
 - They use their book an average of 5-6 times each year for 5 years.

Guessing at “what to do” can have costly regrets.

Average co-pays are \$20-\$25 per primary care doctor visit, \$35 per specialist visit and \$100-\$500 per ER visit.

Health plans pick up the rest.

Staying home when not necessary can affect productivity, wages and/or replacement costs.

Not staying home when contagious spreads germs at work.

Delays in needed care needlessly increases severity of many infections, asthma, cancers and other problems. This increases treatment costs, recovery times and other risks.

D. Risk Management Checklist – Research & Experience Based

FACT: Best results require a number of strategic actions – not just flu shots.

Mark (✓) the actions already done and next ones to-do.

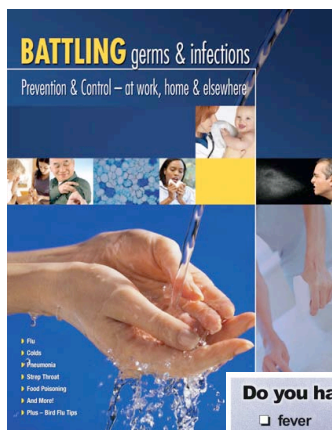
Here's what to do:	Budgeting* & Other Guidelines	Done	To-Do
1. Make getting a seasonal flu shot easy for employees via group screenings at the worksite or local pharmacies. <i>Other family members can obtain at other convenient locations and consult their employers, schools, doctors, community resources and health plans for locations, cost and benefit coverage details.</i>	About \$25-\$28 per person via local pharmacy or worksite screenings. Vaccine is effective for 2009-2010 strains only. Funding options: Assure coverage via health plans for those with coverage. Should be considered a claim as with other vaccines. For employees without insurance, consider covering flu shot costs in part or whole.		
2. As able, reinforce the importance and convenience of employees and/or family members at-risk getting the: a) H1N1 vaccine based on risk as recommended by the CDC. As of this update, local pharmacies, county health and provider vaccine clinics may be the earliest/easiest ways to receive the H1N1 vaccine. b) Pneumonia vaccine based on age, existing health problems (e.g., asthma, immune suppressed).	H1N1 vaccine should be less than \$28 per person. Vaccine is effective for 2009-2010 strain only. Note: Pneumonia is an opportunistic infection that can develop during/after the flu – especially with those at-risk which varies by age and existing health conditions (e.g., asthma, immune suppressed). Vaccine costs vary. #1 (above) funding options also apply to 2a and 2b.		
3. Strive to keep getting vaccines voluntary, subject to job-related risks, incentives for appropriate vaccines as recommended.	Voluntary is important for personal variations in risks, preferences, circumstances and for legal reasons.		
4. Help all employees learn about the details, who should consider getting them first, etc.	Key for being informed choices. Can use #5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 to help get this done.		
5. Get a <i>Battling Germs and Infections</i> guide into the hands of every employee and family – to help everyone learn all ways of resisting and avoiding the flu, H1N1, colds and other common infections.	About \$2.80 per employee/family – will help for about 5 years. Can mail to the homes, distribute at meetings, in staff mail boxes or when flu shots are offered. Trainers and webinars available and E-learning lessons via #8 if desired. Reinforce with #10.		
6. Get a <i>Healthwise Handbook</i> self-care kit into the hands of every family – with updated guidelines on when to call or see a doctor and home treatment for the flu, colds, respiratory and other infections. If able, include some training and doctor visit tools with key questions and reminders for better visits, care and results.	Many employers have already done this. If not, allow about \$7.50 (or less) per employee/family for handbook – which will be used and effective for about 5 years (versus a flu shot for 1 year). If desired, allow an extra \$6 or less per family for the training DVD and doctor visit tools. Can mail with and/or distribute in same ways as #5.		
7. Communicate your worksite policies on infection-related illnesses, prevention (e.g., flu shots), support resources available, staying at home with certain infections, working from home and sick days.	Can be done with #5, 8, 9, emails, letters to home and/or meetings.		
8. Give people an employer-specific website for accurate, calm, updates on the flu, H1N1, related e-learning lessons and links to accredited medical databases for informed decisions.	For a site focused on flu, H1N1, colds, pneumonia other germs and infections, allow about \$6.00 per employee for 6 months; or \$10 for year. If existing client there may be no charge depending on type of site.		
9. Tailor the website to include the places employees can get the vaccines, costs and related cost coverage via benefit plans and/or other means.	\$150 or more depending on type site and work involved. If existing client, there may be no charge.		
10. Use posters in eating areas, rest rooms, water stations, day care centers and other key places with reminders of top ways of preventing infections. Include reinforcing emails and articles in newsletters.	No charge if using free pdf posters or creating internally or linking to quality articles from credible sources. Customizable newsletters, articles and posters vary in cost by options and source.		
11. Making keeping clean hands easier with ample soap, dryers, paper towels and waterless hand cleaners (in key areas).	Already budgeted for in most organizations. Use posters (#10) near sinks and hand cleaner to reinforce keeping hands clean.		
12. Consider doing all the above for all hourly and salaried employees – even those who do not have medical benefits via the company including part-timers, temps and contract workers.	Absenteeism and productivity are affected by the flu far more than health costs. Any employee can get it and spread it – OR – help to prevent and contain it. Cover costs via existing benefit plan and/or outside the plan.		

* Above rates are estimates and do not include all options, taxes, shipping or minimums which may vary by item and source.

FACTS: *All strategy components help to mitigate the flu, other infections and related costs. Some resources cost less, help the whole family and work for 5 years.*

E. Main External Cost Components of Strategy			Scope, Effectiveness & Primary Benefits to Employer, Employees & Families					
Risk Management Components	Per Person	Per Employee/Family	Problems Covered	Effectiveness	Helps Prevent	Helps Handle	Helps Absenteeism	Helps Quality, Costs * & Results of Care
1. Seasonal Flu shot	\$25-28		1	6-12 months [^]	xx		xx	x
2. H1N1 Flu shot	<\$28		1	6-12 months ^{^^}	xx		xx	x
5. Battling Germs guide		\$3.16 or less	>25	5-6 years	xx	x	xx	xx
6. Healthwise Handbook		\$7.50 or less	>200	5-6 years	x	xx	xx	xx
DVD, Dr-Visit tools		\$6.00 or less	any visit	5-6 years		xx	xx	xx
8. e-learning/other web tools		\$6-10 or less	>5,000	6-12 months [^]	x	xx	xx	xx
* Shipping/tax/mail for 5&6		TBD						
Totals This Year → \$25-\$56 \$3.16-\$26.60			* Out-of-pocket and plan paid expenses – e.g., improved visits.					
Years 2-5 → >\$25 \$6-\$10 or less**			** If already have #5&6, then only need #8 per EE/F in subsequent years.					
ROI findings available upon request.			^ Each year offered. ^^ If applicable; H1N1 may subside in 2011.					

What do some of these resources look like?



Do you have?

fever chills
 cough sore throat
 runny nose body aches
 headache tiredness
 diarrhea vomiting

Is it the flu, cold, or ?

STOP

Check

- Your Healthwise® Handbook
- The Battling Germs booklet
- Your employer's health website
- The CDC at www.flu.gov
- or call 1 (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636)

If you have the flu, tell your supervisor, stay home as recommended and get medical care if needed.

FIGHT THE FLU
8 Ways to Stay Healthy at Work

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Keep common surfaces clean.
- Do not use other workers' phones, desks, offices, or equipment.
- Don't spread the flu! If you are sick, stay home.
- Get vaccinated against seasonal flu.

If you are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications you should receive the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available.

For More Information

- Check your employer's health website.
- Check the CDC website: www.flu.gov
- Read about flu prevention and symptoms in your Healthwise Handbook or other good self-care book.
- Read your Battling Germs & Infections guidebook.



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- ◆ Use the online store to order books, guides and other tools under quantities of 500.
- ◆ Get pdfs of generic posters.
- ◆ Try the demo of the web site and online tools on the flu, H1N1 and related conditions.

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