

How to minimise spreading germs at work



Adults in the UK usually catch between two to five colds a year. Imagine the cost impact of this on your business. Here are 6 tips to help minimise the spreading of germs.

6 Tips to minimise the spread of germs;

1. Encourage hand washing in washroom areas.

- The single most effective way to kill germs and stop the spread of disease is to use soap and hot water for 20 seconds. Wash your hands after using the washroom and before preparing or eating food.
- When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used.

2. Use paper hand towel dispensers

A study carried out in Germany showed that;

- Textile towels only removed around 4% of bacteria from the hands and are a possible source of contamination since they allow washroom users to potentially dry their hands on the bacteria left behind by the previous user.
- Warm air dryers actually increased the amount of bacteria on the hands by 117%.
- Paper disposable hand towels were the most hygienic option since they removed an average of 24% of the bacteria from the hands.

3. Keep your work area clean

- A typical desk has about 21,000 germs per square inch. Compare that with an office toilet seat carrying 49 germs a square inch.
- Desk surfaces, phones, keyboards and computer mice are havens for germs because they are used so often. The best way to kill bacteria is to wipe down your work area with disinfectant. Keep work surfaces, telephones, computer equipment and other frequently touched surfaces and office equipment clean.

4. Make sure your cleaners are using best practice

- Any efforts you make personally towards minimize the spread of germs can be compromised if your cleaner is cross contaminating with sloppy hygiene habits.
- Ensure your cleaner is using a colour coding scheme for cloths, mops and gloves. Try to get an assurance that the cleaners are trained on the importance of this, and where possible, observe them yourself to check.

5. Discourage Presentee-ism

- Presentee-ism is the compulsion we feel to be at work even when we are ill. While this is in some ways commendable, it is not appreciated by those people who then catch the same virus.
- Ensure people are aware of the issues and stigma of presentee-ism and, if possible, develop a friendly policy so that people are not too financially penalized for staying at home.

6. Use Disposable Cups or Use a Dishwasher

- A lot of companies are moving towards plastic disposable cups in the kitchen so as to avoid cross contamination.
- This is not always conducive to important meetings, so if you use the usual glasses and china mugs, it is far better to clean them through a dishwasher than by hand in the sink.

And lastly...

Keep fit to boost your immune system

Your body has a better chance of fighting off viruses if you are in good shape. Maintaining a healthy and balanced diet, drinking plenty of fluids and doing a minimum of 30 minutes of daily exercise will safeguard your body for the onslaught of germs that the cold and flu season brings.