

# Sick At Work: This Flu Season, Employees May Pick Up More Than Gossip At The Water Cooler

(NAPSA)—Flu can spread like wildfire in the workplace but two recent surveys suggest that companies and employees may not be prepared to control the spread of flu in the workplace.

A survey done by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) showed that 63 percent of human resource professionals said their company had taken no formal steps to educate employees about minimizing the flu's spread at the office, while 58 percent of employees said it would be helpful to receive such information. A second survey, conducted by Omnibus, showed that while 39 percent of adults know that they should see a doctor within two days of exhibiting flu symptoms, only half (50 percent) said that they plan on going to a doctor if they come down with flu this year.

"It helps if employees are aware of flu symptoms, such as sudden, high fever and aches and pains," said Susan J. Rehm, M.D., medical director, National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and of the Department of Infectious Disease at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. "If you think you have flu symptoms, you should



visit the doctor as soon as possible to receive prescription treatment for the flu. Prescription antiviral medications can actually shorten the number of days that one is sick, which can get you on your feet and back to work quicker."

There are four antiviral medications that your doctor can prescribe: Tamiflu (oseltamivir phosphate), Relenza, amantadine, and rimantadine. Tamiflu, the only prescription antiviral medication that can treat both type A and type B influenza in patients one year and older, can help people with the flu heal faster and can

also be taken to prevent the flu in patients 13 years and older.

NFID has developed tips to help employees stay healthy at work. The educational bulletin can be downloaded at [www.nfid.org](http://www.nfid.org) and was made possible through an unrestricted educational grant from Roche.

## Flu-tudes

- 34 percent say that "annoyed" best describes their sentiments when co-workers come to work while sick with the flu
- 75 percent responded that their company encourages employees to stay home from work when they are sick, yet 38 percent feel pressured to come to work despite their illness
- 59 percent are not concerned or hesitant about going to work even though a co-worker is sick, while four out of 10 have gotten the flu from a sick co-worker
- Antibiotics are not effective against the flu, yet 34 percent said that they have taken an antibiotic to treat the flu.
- 55 percent said that they have eaten chicken soup to treat the flu, yet only 16 percent said that they have used antiviral medicine to treat it.