



HOW TO AVOID THE FLU AT HOME AND AT THE OFFICE

Flu (influenza) season is in full force. Influenza, a highly contagious respiratory illness, not to be confused with the stomach bug, can have some or all of these symptoms: fever or feeling feverish/chills; cough; sore throat; running/stuffy nose; muscle or body aches; headaches; fatigue; and vomiting/diarrhea (more common in children than adults).

Flu germs can easily be spread by touching a surface that has the flu virus on it or when an infected person coughs, sneezes and talks up to six feet away. The best way to prevent getting the flu is to get vaccinated – follow vaccine recommendations from your physician – along with avoiding the virus itself by following the precautions to the right.

"How Flu Spreads," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), Aug. 27, 2018.

"How to avoid the flu: Disinfect your house to kill the flu virus," Karen B. Gibbs, [today.com](https://www.today.com), Jan. 22, 2018.

AT HOME

Always wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds – especially when you first come home and before you eat. Try keeping the person who is infected with the virus in as few rooms as possible. Next, disinfect all surfaces with an antibacterial cleaner and sanitize toys with a bleach water solution (two teaspoons of bleach per one gallon of water). Avoid using the same hand towels as the sick person and handle the sick person's clothing as little as possible to prevent spreading germs. Consider sanitizing your laundry with bleach, and clean your washing machine after washing the clothes, bedding and towels of the sick person.

AT WORK

If you are sick, stay home! It's not worth going to the office with the flu and potentially infecting several of your colleagues, customers or clients. Individuals are contagious during the first three days of contracting the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend workers with suspected or confirmed flu who do not have a fever should stay home from work at least four to five days after the onset of symptoms. Employees with a fever should also not return to work until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone.

To prevent contracting the virus, disinfect your workspace and always remember to wash your hands thoroughly.



Protect Your Wellbeing as a Health Care Professional

Here are five key practices for cultivating your own wellbeing and nurturing your relationships with colleagues and patients as a health care professional:

Connection

When you intentionally have kind and supportive interactions with others, you can encourage a collaborative work environment where successes and failures can be shared and bared together. Bringing a sense of belonging to your workplace could involve intentionally scheduling a time to check in with your colleagues about what is going well, creating a space for shared photos or inspirations for everyone, or engaging in meaningful and playful activities together like deep conversations or a fun treasure hunt.

Gratitude

Simple practices of gratitude do more than just shift our wellbeing and outlook; they can also ignite more kind and altruistic behavior. They can be at the beginning of a meeting or privately with a colleague, and when we receive and acknowledge generosity from others, we are more likely to share that feeling through more acts of kindness. Genuine gratitude goes far beyond just saying “thanks.” It includes a clear description of what you are thankful for and how it helped or supported you.

Empathy

Researchers are finding a measure of empathy can effectively inform clear-headed, compassionate care. However, there is still the risk of experiencing “empathic distress”

when you become overly identified with a patient, but you can protect yourself against this. If you have a friend or colleague whom you trust and feel safe around, engaging in caring and sharing together could help you find ways to continue offering care to others without draining yourself.

Self-Compassion

When you practice self-compassion, you take a moment of mindfulness to recognize your difficulty and struggle. Just acknowledging your challenge is very powerful on its own. The next step is recognizing you’re not alone in your struggle or suffering and that many people are in the same situation. And finally, you apply some kindness toward yourself: a phrase or word that feels soothing. You can follow these three simple steps any time during the day as you reflect on your challenges.

Meaning and Purpose

Health care has real meaning because it involves helping others in being well, but it can be hidden beneath intense schedules and the demands of electronic medical records. When your own sense of efficacy or value is compromised, hearing about simple feelings of meaning or gratitude from a colleague can provide support and inspiration.

“Five Ways to Protect Your Well-Being as a Health Care Professional,” Eve Ekman, greatergood.berkeley.edu, Dec. 3, 2019.



Stovetop Lentil Soup

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 45 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 55 minutes

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1 large carrot, chopped (about 1 ¼ cups)
- 2 celery ribs, chopped (about 1 ¼ cups)
- 2 cups lentils, green or brown, rinsed
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 6 cups vegetable or chicken broth, low sodium
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon coriander
- 1 ½ teaspoon paprika
- 2 dried bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- salt and pepper to taste

- 1** Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat and add the garlic and onion, cook for two minutes or until slightly softened.
- 2** Add the celery and carrots and cook for seven to 10 minutes or until softened.
- 3** Stir in the remaining ingredients except the lemon and salt.
- 4** Increase the heat and bring the mixture to a boil. Place the lid on the pot and turn the heat down to simmer for 35 to 40 minutes or until lentils are soft.
- 5** Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add lemon juice just before serving.

Adapted from: recipetineats.com