

e-Alert

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Protect Your Business and Employees from Seasonal Flu

Background

Influenza (flu) season lasts from October through May in the United States, with peak flu activity happening between December and March. The country's flu activity has been unusual since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which could pose consequences for the upcoming season.

Furthermore, flu season in the Southern Hemisphere may indicate what's to come in the United States. Australia for example has been experiencing an unusual surge in flu activity early in the season. Health experts now warn that the same could happen in the United States later this year.

Summary

Each year, seasonal influenza has a marked impact on businesses and employers. Seasonal flu can cause increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, and higher health care costs. As an employer, you are well-positioned to help keep your employees healthy and minimize the impact that influenza has on your business.

The flu is different from a cold, as it usually comes on suddenly. It's also important to note

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that COVID-19 and the flu may present similar symptoms. As such, testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis.

How can the flu be treated?

Antiviral drugs can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick, as well as prevent serious flu complications like pneumonia. The CDC recommends prompt treatment for people who have or are suspected to have the flu. This is especially important for those who have a high risk of serious flu complications, including:

- Young children
- Adults 65 years or older
- Pregnant women
- People with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease

How can the flu be prevented?

The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated every year. This year, due to COVID-19, it's more important than ever. The CDC recommends that everyone over the age of 6 months receive their annual flu vaccine.

To keep yourself safe, you should also:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water often or use an alcohol-based sanitizer when soap and water aren't available.

Employer Next Steps

- Encourage staff to get an annual flu shot. Flu shots are available through your primary care doctor, local pharmacies, drug stores, and urgent care clinics. All the major chain pharmacies in the US — CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, Walmart, and Kroger — offer flu shots at most of their locations across the country.
- Download the template [email](#) that you may send out to your staff.
- You may also consult the CDC seasonal flu business [website](#) for more information and resources.
- If you have further questions regarding this e-Alert, please contact our [Benefits Team](#).

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