

What Can You Do To Avoid The Flu?

Get a flu shot and remember to wash, wipe and sanitize; Study finds these three steps can reduce chance of cold or flu infections by up to 80 percent

ROSWELL, Ga., Jan. 17, 2013 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- This year's flu season has now been declared an epidemic, with a particularly dangerous strain that has hospitalized more than 3,700 people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

There are a number of steps people can take – at work, at home and at school – to help reduce their chances of getting the flu.

"Chief among them is getting a flu shot," said Kelly Arehart, Ph.D., Global Innovation Manager for The Healthy Workplace Project, Kimberly-Clark Professional. "But even people who get vaccinated can still get sick. There are additional precautions people should take to keep themselves and the people they spend the most time with healthy, such as adopting a simple three-step 'wash, wipe, sanitize' protocol."

Arehart offers the following five flu-prevention tips:

1. Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces – Viruses on surfaces like sink faucets and door handles can spread rapidly, especially in public places such as offices and schools. Cleaning surfaces with disinfecting wipes can reduce surface contamination on these germ "hot spots." Facilities that provide these and other tools to employees, teachers and students can make a difference. A recent study for [The Healthy Workplace Project](#) by Dr. Charles Gerba of the University of Arizona found that implementing the program's "wash, wipe, sanitize" protocol in the workplace reduces the probability of catching the flu or common cold by 80 percent. It can also reduce the number of surfaces contaminated by viruses by 62 percent. Another study of elementary schools found that when students were provided with the tools and knowledge necessary to break the chain of germ transmission in the classroom, contamination levels were significantly reduced throughout the entire school. The Healthy Workplace Project is a [Kimberly-Clark Professional](#) program that gets employees actively involved in helping to reduce the spread of cold and flu germs throughout the office. [The Healthy Schools Project](#) is a similar program for schools.

2. Wash hands often – especially before eating, after using the restroom and after being outside. Use soap and warm water for 20 seconds. It is also important to dry your hands with a clean, fresh towel. Use instant hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

3. Take steps to prevent the spread of germs – Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze and then throw the tissue away. Try to use an anti-viral tissue, since some cold and flu viruses can live up to 24 hours on regular tissues.

4. **Cough or sneeze into your elbow** – This will also help prevent the spread of germs since one sneeze can spray up to 3,000 infectious droplets into the air at more than 100 mph. If you don't have a tissue handy, use the inner part of your sleeve at the elbow.

5. **If you get sick, stay home** – If you do become sick with a flu-like illness, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

To arrange an interview with Kelly Arehart, contact kcphwp@schwartzmsl.com or call Rachel Gross at 781-684-0770. For more information about how to reduce germs in offices see <http://www.multivu.com/mnr/56343-kimberly-clark-study-kitchens-break-rooms-crawling-with-bacteria-germs>.

For more information about The Healthy Workplace Project visit www.healthyworkplaceproject.com. For The Healthy Schools Project, visit www.thehealthyschoolsproject.com.

About The Healthy Workplace Project

The Healthy Workplace Project is a multi-faceted program designed by Kimberly-Clark Professional to help companies provide their employees with a healthier and more productive office environment. It offers a unique approach to hand and surface hygiene that helps employees understand how germs are transmitted to help stop their spread throughout the workplace. The program provides educational materials in conjunction with hand and surface hygiene products to employees, arming them with the tools and knowledge necessary to break the cycle of germ transmission in the office. By reinforcing the importance of the three-step protocol of "wash, wipe, sanitize" through The Healthy Workplace Project, employers can help reduce that impact. For more information, visit www.healthyworkplaceproject.com.

About The Healthy Schools Project

The Healthy Schools Project is a new program from Kimberly-Clark Professional that offers a simple-to-implement curriculum with unique materials and product solutions designed for all education levels – with age-appropriate materials for kindergarten to college students. *Super Germ Fighters*, an interactive K-5 program, empowers children to fight germs in their classrooms by delivering a hands-on experience using kid-friendly products such as Kleenex Moisturizing Foam Hand Sanitizer, Kleenex Anti-Viral Facial Tissue, and alcohol and bleach-free Scott Surface Wipes, along with posters, clings and stickers to reinforce the importance of good hand and surface hygiene habits. For more information, visit www.thehealthyschoolsproject.com.

About Kimberly-Clark Professional

Kimberly-Clark Professional partners with businesses to create Exceptional Workplaces. Kimberly-Clark Professional helps transform workplaces making them safer, healthier, and more productive. Key brands in this segment include: Kleenex, Scott, WypAll, Kimtech, and Jackson Safety. Kimberly-Clark Professional, located in Roswell, Ga., is one of Kimberly-Clark Corporation's four business sectors, www.kcprofessional.com.

About Kimberly-Clark

Kimberly-Clark and its well-known global brands are an indispensable part of life for people in more than 175 countries. Every day, nearly a quarter of the world's population trust K-C's brands and the solutions they provide to enhance their health, hygiene and well-being. With brands such as Kleenex, Scott, Huggies, Pull-Ups, Kotex and Depend, Kimberly-Clark holds the No. 1 or No. 2 share position in more than 80 countries. To keep up with the latest K-C news and to learn more about the company's 140-year history of innovation, visit www.kimberly-clark.com.

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