

Prevention and Spreading of Viruses



By now, you've heard of the Coronavirus, the new potential supervirus – this one originating in China with a few cases now in the U.S. This is a good opportunity to remind your team members of hygiene practices to maintain a cleaner and safer workplace for everyone.

How does Coronavirus spread?

- Coronaviruses "primarily spread through close contact with another individual, in particular through coughing and sneezing on somebody else who is within a range of about 3 to 6 feet from that person,"
- If an infected person sneezes or coughs onto a surface — a countertop, for example — and another person touches that surface and then rubs his or her eyes or nose, for example, the latter may get sick.
- It's still unclear, however, how long the virus particles for this new coronavirus can live on surfaces.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent the Coronavirus. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of all respiratory viruses, including these:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses. CDC does have specific guidance for travelers. However, team members should take precautions when traveling to foreign countries. There are traveler advisories for certain countries and the list can change frequently.

Signs of infection include: Fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, the new Coronavirus can lead to pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. The incubation period of the Coronavirus remains unknown.

Managers should plan for absences as team members take time off for medical needs. Have a plan for support staff to be ready to step in, if necessary.