



Safety Net



Welcome

HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the fourth edition of SafetyNet for 2007. During this term, staff involved in organisational health from around the state have had the opportunity to converge on Brisbane for the Organisational Health conference. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody involved as well as the Regional Managers for releasing these valuable staff. The Organisational Health conference provides an excellent opportunity for collegiate support, the sharing of ideas and for planning strategies to align with the needs of schools.

The focus of the conference was to review the strategic direction for all areas of Organisational Health, including: Health and Safety, Injury Management, Claims Management as well as Employee Assistance. Discussions were greatly informed by data presented to the groups including WorkCover "Snapshot" data from the Organisational Health Unit and the Strategic Human Resources "Skyscraper" reports. These reports proved clear links between safe, healthy and positive school cultures and improved student outcomes.

I am pleased to advise that most regions now have a functioning Regional Workplace Health and Safety Standing Committee and a number of unresolved/outstanding issues have been forwarded from these committees up to the Corporate WH&S Standing Committee. This process expedites discussion, action and implementation of solutions across the state. For example, the Fitzroy-Central West Regional committee recently forwarded the issue of teacher voice strain to the committee and a state-wide strategy is currently being actioned. The next meeting has been scheduled for 13th September 2007.

As this process is proving so successful, I encourage all staff to contribute by participating in their own committee or consultative structure to ensure that health, safety and wellbeing issues are raised and dealt with at the necessary level of the department. More information about how the Department's Consultative Framework works throughout the department is available in the procedure:

HLS-PR-016: www.education.qld.gov.au/strategic/epr/health/hlspr016/.

This newsletter highlights a number of new publications aimed at improving the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Please access these resources in your ongoing work to create positive, healthy and safe learning and working environments.

Gary Barnes

Assistant Director-General, Strategic Human Resources

Work Safe Week 2007

Work Safe Week is an initiative of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland to focus community attention on safety at work and its impact on our lives.

Making sure people return home from work safely is the focus of this year's Work Safe Week from 21 to 27 October. For most people the most treasured moments in their lives happen outside of work, which is why it's so important to come home safely.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland advise that each year in Queensland, around 100 people are killed as a result of a work related injury or disease. Workplace incidents have a huge impact not just on workers but family, friends and the community.

Work Safe Week is the perfect opportunity to run an event highlighting the importance of putting safety first in order to reduce workplace injuries. A secondary theme of Work Safe Week 2007 relates to reducing injuries caused by slips, trips and falls. Slips, trips and falls are common in our school environments and are a leading cause of strain and sprain injuries.

There are a range of activities running throughout the state during Work Safe Week. Schools and offices are also encouraged to run a promotional event or activity at their site. For example; holding a safety talk, running a safety poster competition for the students or setting up a safety display.

Contact your Regional Senior Health and Safety Consultant to find out if there are any Work Safe Week activities occurring in your region. Contact details: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html>.

Further information can be obtained from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland at:
www.worksafeweek.qld.gov.au.

August 2007





What's on the Safety Net?

One of the most effective ways to protect you, your friends and family from influenza (the flu) is to practise good personal hygiene. Below are the five simple ways to prevent the spread of influenza through good hygiene practices for infection control.

Five simple ways to prevent the spread of influenza



1. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough

The flu virus can travel through the air when a person coughs or sneezes. When you cough or sneeze you should turn away from other people and, where possible, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve. Remember to

wash your hands as soon as possible afterwards. Where possible, use disposable tissues rather than a handkerchief, which could store the virus, and always put the used tissue into the nearest bin, rather than a pocket or handbag.



2. Wash your hands

Washing your hands regularly even when they aren't visibly dirty is the single most effective way of killing the flu virus.



1 Wet your hands, then apply soap



2 Lather vigorously for 15-20 seconds



3 Rinse with water



4 Dry your hands afterwards with a clean towel

Always wash your hands:

- after you've been to the toilet
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- after being in contact with someone who has a cold or flu
- before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth and
- before preparing food and eating.



3. Don't share personal items

The flu virus can spread when someone touches an object with the virus on it and then touches their face.

If a member of your household has the flu: keep their personal items, such as towels, bedding and toothbrushes separate; and do not share eating and drinking utensils, food or drinks.



4. Clean surfaces

Flu viruses can live on surfaces for a number of hours. You should regularly clean surfaces such as tables, benches and fridge doors with soap and water or detergent.



5. Avoid close contact with others

Keeping your distance from others (at least 1 metre apart) when you are feeling unwell will help reduce the chances of spreading the flu virus to other people. Avoid going out in public when you are sick. If you have the flu, you should remain at home while you are unwell

and have a fever. You should not go to work or school or attend other public gatherings and avoid taking public transport.

What are the symptoms of influenza?

- Chills, shivering and fever (temperature over 38 degrees Celsius)
- Headache
- Muscle aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Sneezing
- Dry cough
- Tiredness
- Trouble breathing



If you experience any of these symptoms, you should avoid contact with other people wherever possible. If you are concerned about your symptoms, or they become worse, you should seek medical advice immediately. It is especially important to get medical advice early in the course of illness in children, and in people who have certain chronic medical conditions. Your doctor will be able to advise if you have a chronic condition which puts you at particular risk of the complications of influenza.

Never give aspirin, or medications containing aspirin, to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever, without first speaking to your doctor. Paracetamol should be used as an alternative to reduce fever.

Remember, while cold and flu medications may relieve the symptoms, you are still capable of passing on the infection and should avoid contact with other people.

Why should I worry about the flu?

Although most people recover from the flu quickly, some people such as young children, older people and people with certain health conditions can be seriously affected by the flu, which can sometimes even result in death.

Flu vaccination can be administered to anyone who wishes to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza. Annual vaccination is recommended for people who are at increased risk of flu related complications, including all people 65 years and older. The flu vaccine is free for all Australians aged 65 and older.