

SWINE FLU RISK ASSESSMENT

The desired result of the government's "catch it, bin it, kill it" campaign to control swine flu, may be giving cleaners a headache. As the virus gathers pace, cleaners within VSG are now faced with bins full of potentially germ-laden tissue's. Their job demands close contact with these and other debris.

But although tissues may seem to be a key focus for contamination, according to the HPA the virus only lives on them for about 30 minutes. **However hard surfaces like desks and keyboards, and hard items in bins like drink-cans etc, could harbour the virus for up to two days.**

"NHS and HPA guidelines say if anyone is unwell with flu-like symptoms then they should self isolate at home to reduce the risk of the virus spreading to other people. However cleaners cannot possibly know who is ill in an office or any other premises.

VSG request to clients is to try to keep cleaners informed by putting a simple desk or work area sign up if anyone has had to self isolate. This can alert cleaners to ensure that all near by hard-surfaces are cleaned thoroughly as priority.

The following section identifies measures for reducing the spread of the flu virus at work. These are grouped under environmental, organisational, and individual behaviour.

	To reduce transmission from a person showing symptoms to a healthy/susceptible person	To reduce the risk of a healthy susceptible person becoming infected
Environmental (action taken to alter the immediate environment)	<p>Mangers/supervisors should encourage those that are ill to remain at home.</p> <p>Individuals with flu like symptoms should stay at home. Inform your line manager as soon as possible and keep them informed of your condition.</p> <p>Surfaces should be cleaned more frequently using the cleaning materials provided. This is particularly important in areas such as toilets. Door handles going in and out should be wiped clean, hand driers; door handles to cubicles, soap dispensers should also be wiped.</p> <p>Telephones and keyboards should be cleaned using the solution/wipes provided</p>	<p>All employees should be encouraged to wash hands, particularly if they have come into contact with someone who is showing signs of flu like symptoms.</p> <p>Employees showing symptoms should not come into contact with other employees.</p> <p>Tissues should be discarded into waste bins. Waste bins should be emptied more frequently.</p> <p>Tissues found on the floor should be picked up with the use of litter pickers and discarded into waste bins.</p>
Organisational (measures taken to	Staff should be educated on the signs and symptoms of flu to promote early	Educate staff on signs and symptoms of flu like viruses to promote early

<p>modify the organisation/pattern of daily life</p>	<p>recognition. Each member of staff is required to read this assessment and they should sign to say they have read the assessment.</p> <p>Employees who feel unwell with flu like symptoms whilst at work should be encouraged to home.</p>	<p>recognition.</p> <p>If a member of staff suspects another member of staff or any other person in the working environment of having or showing signs of the flu like virus should report this to their line manager.</p>
<p>Individual (actions taken at the level of the individual to modify behaviour)</p>	<p>Individuals with symptoms consistent with flu should wear face masks if attendance to work and face to face interactions are unavoidable. This is a last resort measure, staff should stay at home and use phone to contact people if required.</p>	<p>Cleaners must wear rubber/disposable gloves. It is important to wash hands after removal. Avoid touching face, mouth or nose while wearing gloves or before you have washed your hands. Wash hands frequently with soap and water</p> <p>If you have been in contact with someone showing signs of flu like symptoms, do not touch your mouth, eyes or nose until you have cleaned your hands.</p> <p>If you come into contact with discarded tissues, wash your hands.</p>

