

You Should Not Go to Work If You Get Sick

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The average adult gets an average of 2-4 colds a year, with each one lasting about a week.

This adds up to a lot of missed work days – 23 million to be exact. In fact, according to a recent article on CNN, up to 40% of lost time from work is due to the common cold.

Therefore, if you have been knocked out by a cold or flu, it is tempting to dose up on medication and slog through. But, what you think you should do and what you really should are often two different things.

You should stay home, and here are 4 good reasons why:

1) You'll get other people sick

Germs spread. When you are sick, you rub your nose and eyes. You may not even realize it. Some viruses can live on skin or other surfaces (doorknobs, phones, pens, keyboards, etc.) for hours and will infect others. You also sneeze. When you sneeze you spray germs everywhere (even when covering your mouth). If you go to work, you will get other people sick.

2) Your co-workers do not want you there

You will not be perceived as a hero. Nobody wants a sick person coming into the office. Put yourself in others' shoes. Would you want a person sniffing and coughing within feet of you all day long?

3) You'll be less productive

It is hard to think with a stuffy head. You will not be as sharp and efficient. If you are taking cold or flu medicine, the impact could be even larger. Therefore, you will not get much done, making your struggle to get to work useless.

4) It will take longer to recover

Pushing yourself and working too much in the early stages of illness may actually prolong your recovery time. Studies have shown that lack of sleep can weaken your immune system, and a weakened immune system cannot fight off a cold or the flu. However, sleep can boost your immune system, allowing you to heal faster.

But, I have to work.....

If there is a looming deadline, and you have to work, try to work from home so at least you won't get others sick.

If you have exhausted your sick days and you cannot afford to be docked pay, try to keep your distance from others, wash or sanitize your hands often, and cover coughs and sneezes with a sleeve or elbow – not your hands. In addition, disinfect touched objects such as phones, doorknobs, and keyboards, and do not share items such as pens.

However, the best thing you can do is stay home, especially during the earliest part of the illness, when you are the most contagious. This is especially true if you work in tight quarters or if you

- handle food.
- work with young children or the elderly.
- work directly with patients in a healthcare environment.

Cut yourself a break. You did not ask to become sick. No one does. But, if you stay home, you are going to get better much, much faster – allowing you to return to work quicker. That is the best remedy overall.

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