



live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at Moreton & Company.

## Office Germs: What's at work can make you sick

The typical worker's desk has hundreds more bacteria per square inch than an office toilet seat.

Desks, phones and other private surfaces are prime habitats for the viruses and bacteria that cause colds, flu, strep throat, pneumonia and other illnesses.

Germs can live from two to 72 hours or more on hard surfaces and are spread in a couple of ways:

- Infectious droplets from coughs or sneezes move through the air and land on nearby surfaces or are inhaled by others.
- Physical contact is made with infected droplets on a hard surface (i.e., a desk), and are transferred by touching the mouth, eyes, or nose before washing the hands.

### Tidy vs. Clean

Even if you are one of those workers who keep your desk tidy, it may not be “clean.” Unlike toilets, which tend to be cleaned regularly, keyboards, phone receivers and desks rarely receive a wipe-down. Those spilt crumbs are capable of supporting mini ecosystems! Without a cleaning, even a small

area on your desk or phone can sustain millions of bacteria that could potentially cause illness.

### Germ Hot Spots

- Telephones
- Keyboards/mouse
- Desktops
- Doorknobs/buttons/light switches
- Vending machine buttons
- Fax, printer, copy machines
- Water fountain handles/spigots
- Microwave door handles
- Bathroom door handles/faucets
- Chair armrests
- Shared pens and other office items
- Escalator and elevator handrails

### Getting Rid of Germs

Heightened awareness and hygiene efforts can go a long way. Keep the following points in mind and share them with your co-workers:

- Germ-busting at the office is a team effort! One person can infect an entire office of healthy people.
- Regular cleaning of personal workspaces (desk, phone, keyboard, etc.) kills bacteria,



- stopping the spread of germs.
- Frequent cleaning of shared workspaces is essential in maintaining basic proper hygiene and sanitary safety. Disinfection is the goal, so be sure to use a true disinfectant. Daily disinfection reduces bacteria levels by 99%, drastically reducing risk for illness.
- Be considerate of others and cough or sneeze into tissues, your sleeve or the crook of your arm. Wash you hands often and sanitize using alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel (everyone should have these at their desk and in any common areas, including kitchens and restrooms).

### Did you know...?

Germ experts regard “awareness” of germs and where they concentrate as the most important defense against illness – combined with frequent hand washing to flush off microbes before they have a chance to cause real trouble.