

H1N1 Preparedness for Pond, Koi, Water Garden Businesses

Friday, Oct. 2, 2009, 4:30 p.m., EDT

Mother was right, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water. Cold and f
influenza, also known as the swine flu, of significant concern to many people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention listed 26 states [see sidebar below] that reported widespread influenza activity in September, which it called "very unusual."

Staying informed and proactive can help you and your business year-round. Some retailers have expressed concern about how H1N1 influenza might affect employee health and absenteeism as well as customer shopping habits. Have you prepared for the consequences of influenza activity?

I compiled this list of preventive techniques from CDC and other reputable resources. You can stay informed by checking CDC's website; it is updated regularly as information becomes available. Consider getting a seasonal flu shot and/or H1N1 shot. Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it in the trash. No tissue around? Your inside elbow can do the trick in a pinch. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. CDC recommends rubbing hands for 20 seconds -- about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some for more than 2 hours) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables. Keep alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers near cash registers and in break rooms. Encourage employees to sanitize their hands throughout the day. Wipe off shared equipment such as computer components, telephones and cash registers with a germ-killing cleaner before and after a new person uses it. Our office manager placed disinfecting wipes at our public Mac stations and reminded us to clean mice and keyboards between users. Stay home from work or school and limit contact with others if you get sick. Few people are impressed with your dedication when coughing and sneezing your germs on everyone around you.

How have you prepared for influenza season?

States Report Widespread Influenza Activity

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Minnesota
Mississippi
Nevada
New Mexico
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
Texas
Tennessee
Virginia
Washington