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Flu Season and the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting the workforce, and the combination of another potentially bad flu season and the pandemic has public health experts worried. The CDC recommends [strategies](#) to help employers fight the flu and talk to employees about what a flu season during the pandemic looks like.

Educate Employees on the Flu vs. COVID-19

Unfortunately, because the flu and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, some of the symptoms are similar. For example, common flu symptoms include the sudden onset of fever, headache, fatigue, muscle aches, congestion, cough and sore throat. All of those are currently considered symptoms of COVID-19.

One of the difficult aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic is that the [symptoms](#) are wide-ranging and vary in severity. Some with COVID-19 may experience little to no symptoms, while others may be severely ill and require hospitalization.

Due to the similarity in symptoms between COVID-19 and the flu, it may be difficult to determine whether an employee has the flu or COVID-19 without being tested. As such, it's important to encourage employees to stay home if they are sick.

Consider allowing employees to work from home, if they're healthy enough to complete their work or while they wait for test results, and encouraging employees to take paid time off if they need to. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and needs to take time off to recover, they may be eligible for leave under a multitude of federal and state laws.

Preparing Your Workplace for Flu Season During the Pandemic

There are a variety of steps employers can take to protect employees and prepare for flu season—which may include steps you've taken in response to COVID-19—regardless of whether employees are in the office or working remotely.

Here are some strategies to consider:

- Host an on-site, socially distanced vaccination clinic
- Encourage employees to get the flu vaccine
- Disinfect and clean the office
- Implement and enforce social distancing protocols

These strategies may not be right for every organization. Depending on the nature of your business, you may need to implement additional prevention strategies. Contact Bolton to discuss your organization's situation.

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