

Working Mother survey shows one-third of working moms have sent sick child to school or daycare

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

A new survey of working mothers conducted by Working Mother magazine found that one in three Moms have sent their child to school or childcare sick. The most common reason? Mom was unable to take a day off from work to care for the sick child.

Nearly half of survey respondents agreed that work/life balance is made more difficult during the cold and flu season. Although nearly all Moms (more than 90 percent) believe that seasonal flu is a serious illness and 54 percent have some flexibility to work from home, keeping a child home sick is not always an easy decision. Sending a sick child to school or daycare resulted in guilt for the majority of respondents (70%), who expressed serious concerns about their child infecting other children. Moms also said they felt stressed (48.5%), torn (43%) and frustrated (31.2%) when deciding to send their sick child to school.

"Moms often serve as the family health manager, a responsibility that becomes even more difficult for working Moms during the cold and flu season," said Carol Evans, CEO and Founder, Working Mother Media. "While we've made significant strides in recent years in securing flexibility for working Moms who need to take time off to care for sick family members, this survey reinforces that there is still much work to be done."

Adding to Mom's pressure is that when the flu strikes, it can affect the whole family. Nearly 65% of respondents said that when one person in the family gets the flu or a cold, other family members tend to get sick too.

Family Health Manager Provides Helpful Advice

The February/March issue of Working Mother, on newsstands this week, features the Family Health Manager tear-out insert, a one-stop resource for Moms during the cold and flu season. The guide includes tips, such as the following:

- * Avoid enclosed crowded places
- * Wash hands frequently with soap and water
- * Clean objects handled by anyone who is sick
- * Help your family maintain good health habits such as getting enough sleep, regular exercise and making good food choices
- * Stock your medicine cabinet well with the essentials

* Recognize the difference between a cold and the flu

The Family Health Manager also offers guidance on helping sick family members feel better faster. If it's influenza, calling the doctor quickly, within 12-48 hours, is critical. A doctor can prescribe an antiviral medication within the first two days of symptoms to help shorten the duration of illness and help to reduce the risk of complications.

Impact of Cold & Flu Season

The flu season begins in October or November and can last through April or May. Since people are susceptible to the common cold in the winter months as well, the symptoms are often confused with the flu. The cold and influenza are both respiratory illnesses; however, they are caused by two different kinds of viruses and the symptoms are quite different. Although the cold is generally a nuisance, the flu is a serious illness that causes an estimated 36,000 deaths annually in the U.S. Flu symptoms usually come on quickly (within 3-6 hours) and consist of a fever, body aches, dry cough and extreme tiredness. Cold symptoms are less severe and include a stuffy nose, productive cough, slight tiredness and limited body aches.

Children are two to three times more likely than adults to get sick with the flu and are at higher risk for serious complications. Because schools are a primary place for flu viruses to attack and spread, families with school-age children have more infections than other families, with an average of one-third of family members infected each year. Flu continues to cause high rates of absenteeism in America's 119,000 schools, which approximately 1/5 of the U.S. population attend or work in.

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