

Nearly Three-in-Four Workers Go to Work When They are Sick, Finds CareerBuilder Survey

--More Than Half of Workers Report They Feel Guilty When They Call in Sick--

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CHICAGO, Jan. 19, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Sniff, sniff. Achoo! With cold and flu season in full swing, these sounds are likely to be heard around the office. A new CareerBuilder survey finds that nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of workers typically go to work when they are sick. Workplace pressures and "presenteeism" may be causing workers to go in under the weather, as more than half (55 percent) of workers said they feel guilty if they call in sick. The CareerBuilder survey was conducted nationwide from November 15 to December 2, 2010 among more than 3,700 workers.

With so many workers heading to work ill, they are likely passing their germs on to others. More than half of workers (53 percent) said they have gotten sick from a co-worker who came to the office sick, while 12 percent said they picked up a bug from someone who was sick on public transportation going to or from work.

"It's important for employees to take care of their health and the health of others by staying at home if they aren't feeling well," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources at CareerBuilder. "Even if workers feel pressure to be at the office, they should talk to their managers about staying home if they are sick, or ask about other options such as working remotely. Most employers are flexible and understand that employees are more productive if they are feeling their best."

To help encourage a healthy workplace, nearly one-in-five (19 percent) employees said their companies provided flu shots at their office. Nearly two-in-five workers (38 percent) said they were proactive and got a flu shot this year. When workers were asked what other ways they attempt to avoid germs, they said the following:

- I wash my hands often - 78 percent
- I carry hand sanitizer with me and use it often - 32 percent
- I regularly clean my keyboard, phone, desk, etc. - 30 percent
- I avoid shaking hands with people - 15 percent
- I skip meetings where I know people are sick - 3 percent

Haefner offers the following tips for staying well at work:

- **Don't share your germs:** If you are sick, do your best to keep your germs away from others by staying home. If you absolutely must come into the office, try to work in a conference room or away from others so you don't spread your sickness. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.
- **Keep it balanced:** With many workers facing heavier workloads and longer hours, some may be feeling maxed out. Be sure to manage your stress and stay healthy by taking a break during the day, exercising or even practicing yoga or meditation.
- **Talk it out:** If you are concerned about taking days off work when you are ill, talk to your manager or HR department so that you have a clear understanding on how your sick days can be used. Offer to telecommute, delegate or call-in if necessary, but ensure you get as much rest as possible so you are back on your feet.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 3,910 U.S. workers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non-government); ages 18 and over between November 15 and December 2, 2010 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 3,910 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/-1.57 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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