

Presenteeism Is a Big Problem

F: Good morning, Harry. Good to see you.

M: How common is it for people to go to work even though they know they are sick.

F: Well, Harry, it's so common that there is actually a term for it. It's called presenteeism versus absenteeism. And a lot of employees actually go to work because they are afraid people are gonna think they are lazy, they are afraid they are gonna get in trouble with their boss, they don't wanna use their sick days, or they're particularly dedicated to their job. But it's really a good idea to stay home when you are sick because you are less likely to be productive at work, you are more likely to spread your germs to your co-workers. And studies have suggested that presenteeism costs more productivity for companies than actually absenteeism. So it's a big problem.

M: Here is the question though, because I think a lot of people feel like, I have to go to work. There is so much pressure to go to work, to actually show up. How do employers by-and-large feel about this?

F: Well, CCH is corporate service which has conducted a dozen annual surveys and they asked employers, is there a problem? 56% of organizations actually say that presenteeism is a problem in the workplace, which is up from 39% two years ago. So more and more companies are seeing it as a problem.

M: All right. What can be done then to prevent people from coming to work when they are sick?

F: Well, they asked employers that too, so what do you do to keep employees at home? Actually as many as 72% of employers say that they actually will send a sick employee home. 40% say that they try to educate their workers about the importance of staying home when you are sick. 22% actually let people telecommute that they can stay at home instead of coming into the workplace. And some companies actually say they try to foster an environment to encourage, pay co-worker to stay home. Well, a lot of employees disagree. 46% of the employees say that they are still afraid they are gonna be disciplined. So much pressure on the employees to show up.

M: You should talk a little bit about just how easy it is to spread the germs. If I walk in with a flu, it's somebody else who can get it.

F: They are. It's incredibly easy when someone is sick, coughs or sneezes, these little respiratory droplets enter the air, and so if you breathe those things in, you can introduce germs into your body that way, or if you touch something, something as simple as a telephone, a computer keyboard, a door-knob, someone sick has touched. And then you touch your hands to your eyes, or to your nose, then you are likely to get sick as well. That's really easy.

Questions:

1. What is meant in the interview by the term presenteeism?
2. For what reason is presenteeism considered a big problem for companies?
3. What percentage of employers will actually send an employee home when finding him or her sick?
4. Employers do several things to prevent sick people from coming to work. Which of the following is NOT one of these things?
5. According to the interview, which of the following are the primary carrier of germs?

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