

# The Connection™

October 13, 2010



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## Infection Prevention is Everyone's Business

**Celebrate Infection Prevention Week  
October 17-23, 2010**

**It doesn't matter if you're called "Housekeepers," "Custodians" or "Environmental Services." After last year's H1N1 scare and focus on the importance of keeping high-touch surfaces clean and as germ-free as possible, we think you are all "Infection Preventionists".**

For our customers in the health care industry (hospitals and nursing homes) it is time to take pride and remind others in your facility and the public of your role in preventing infection transmission. Make sure your department is included in any recognition activities surrounding Infection Prevention Week, October 17-23.

**If you are in a school, industrial plant, food service facility, prison or office building, you are also essential to preventing infection. In effect, you impact the health of everyone who uses your classrooms, restrooms, offices, elevators, hand railings, door handles, etc., by helping to prevent transmission of everything from the common cold to exotic illnesses.**

**If you would like any assistance in setting up your program, please [email me](#) or contact your PortionPac representative.**

**The time for action is now! So, in addition to your department's programs, each one of us should follow these suggestions from the Center for Disease Control:**

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*Flu is a serious contagious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. In 2009-2010, a new and very different flu virus (called [2009 H1N1](#)) spread worldwide causing the first flu pandemic in more than 40 years. Flu is unpredictable, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects the 2009 H1N1 virus to spread this upcoming season along with other seasonal flu viruses.*

### **1. [Take time to get a flu vaccine.](#)**

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
- While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- The [2010-2011 flu vaccine](#) will protect against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the 2010-2011 season vaccine is available.

- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.

## 2. [Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.](#)

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

## 3. [Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.](#)

- If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.
- Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.
- Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
- It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early (within the first 2 days of symptoms) to treat people who are very sick (such as those who are hospitalized) or people who are sick with flu symptoms and who are at increased risk of severe flu illness, such as pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older and people with certain chronic health conditions.
- Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea.

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