



How a clean office boosts staff happiness and productivity

Today it is more important than ever to provide a safe environment and a hygienic workplace for both staff and visitors. By maintaining a high level of hygiene, you increase productivity and well-being while reducing sick-leave and hygiene worries. Learn about some of the germ hotspots in an office and what you can do to make sure you provide a healthy and productive working environment.

Maintain hygiene to prevent illness

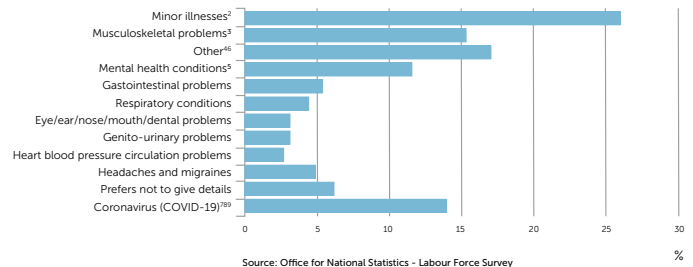
Even if you're not operating in a food preparation environment, a high level of workplace hygiene is necessary for the health and safety of staff and customers. This is because a clean and hygienic workplace can help prevent many instances of illness that lead to sickness absences and lower productivity.

In the UK, minor illnesses such as coughs and colds, sickness, and diarrhea, comprise 26.1% of all sickness absence from work¹. In the USA, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimate that workplace illnesses cost the economy more than \$225 billion annually, which equates to \$1,685 per employee².

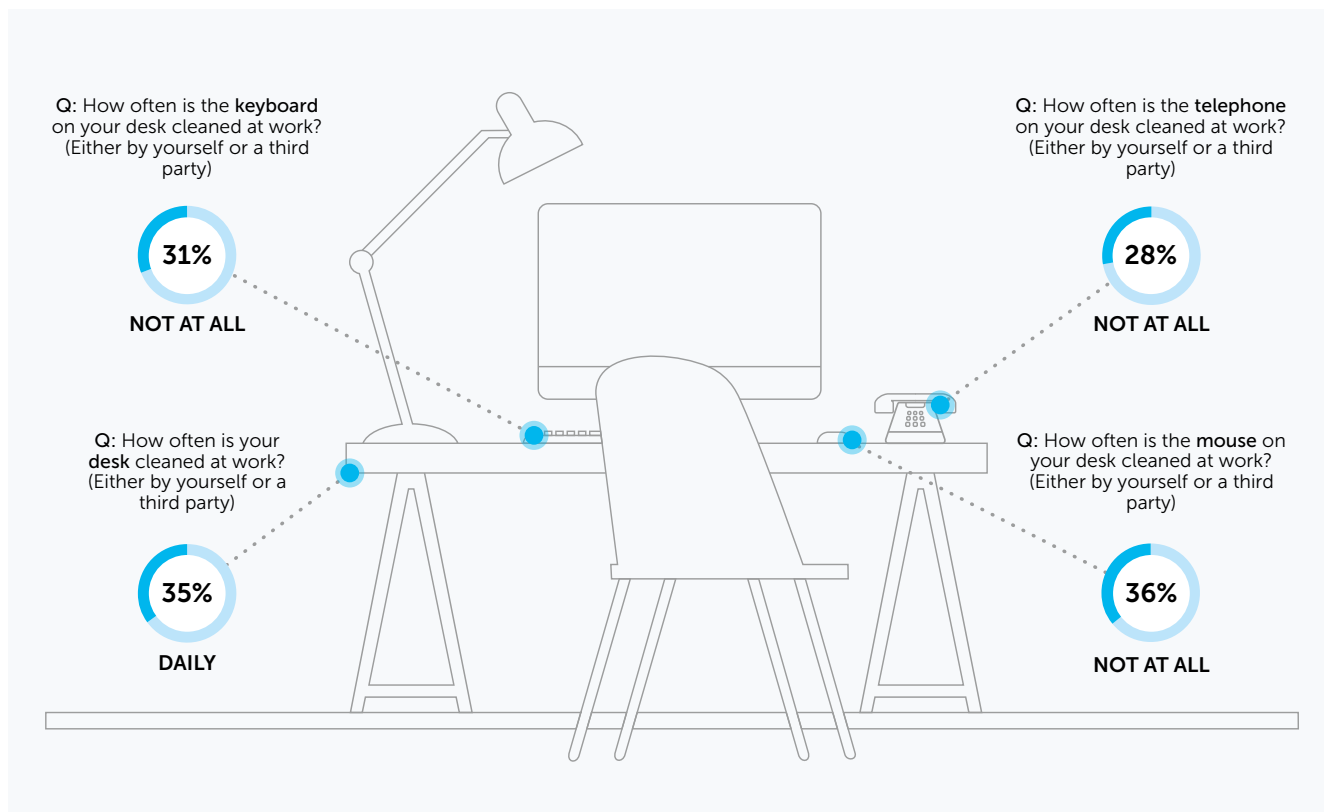
Minor illnesses can often be prevented by maintaining a high level of hygiene. However, in many workplaces, the reality is far from squeaky clean. GSS Facility management, a UK cleaning company, performed a survey of over 650 members of the public workforce to find out how often their workspaces and equipment are cleaned³. The results were a bit discouraging.

"Minor illnesses"; account for over a quarter of all occurrences of sickness absence in 2020

Percentage of occurrences¹ of sickness absence, by reason, 2020, UK



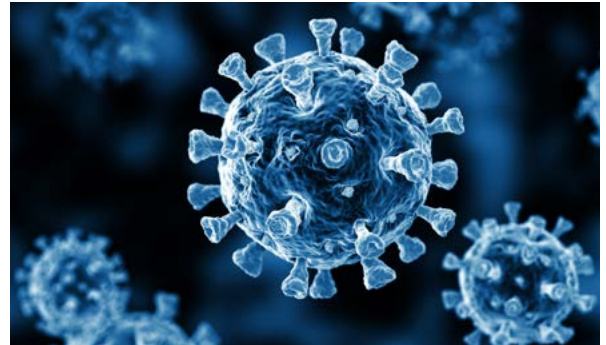
Only 35% responded that their desk is cleaned daily. 36% said that their mouse is never cleaned. Shockingly, the average desk houses more than 400 times the number of bacteria than the average toilet seat while a computer mouse carries twice as many bugs as a toilet flush handle.



Typical germ havens

Many people spend their lunch hour eating at their desk, often working, or surfing the web at the same time. This means food residue is left all over the workstation, particularly on keyboards and mice, making them ideal germs nests.

Shared spaces such as conference rooms, diners, or kitchens also attract germs. Many of the items found there are touched and used by many employees, making them high risk for spreading bacteria and viruses.



Some of the ways that germs spread



This image shows some of the germ hotspots found in office environment.

1. Touching your face

Studies suggest that you may be touching your face around 23 times per hour. Your eyes and mouth are areas where viruses can easily enter your body.

2. Keyboard

About 7,500 organisms hide in your keyboard.

3. Desk

The average desk harbors more than 10 million bacteria, which is about 400 more than the average toilet seat.

4. Coffee mug

Communal coffee mugs may not be the best to use in the office. One study found that even when they're washed and dried, about 90% had significant germs, including some with fecal matter.

5. Sneezing

When you sneeze, the germ-infested droplets can travel as far as 8 meters.

6. Common areas

Conference room armrests, doorknobs and light switches are touched by many hands and cleaned occasionally at best.

7. Hands

About 80 % of common infections are transmitted by touch. Our hands are a real germ motorway. That is why frequent washing is so important.

8. Mobile phone

Your mobile phone is a real germ haven and may carry 10 times more bacteria than a toilet seat.

9. Pen

You might want to think twice about letting a co-worker use your pen. On average, surface germs lurk for up to 72 hours.

A clean office is key to better productivity and satisfaction

Research performed in the Netherlands indicates that clean offices make employees happier and more productive at work⁴. This is confirmed by a survey performed by Tork, Essity's professional hygiene brand. The survey conducted in November 2018 found a significant majority of manufacturing employees identify safety and hygiene (94%) as top enhancers of their happiness on the job⁵.

Proper cleaning and maintaining a high level of hygiene should be seen as investments, which deliver measurable results in supporting the health and wellbeing of your staff.

For example, a study for The Healthy Workplace Project by Dr. Charles Gerba of the University of Arizona⁶ found that implementing the program's "wash, wipe, sanitize" protocol in the workplace reduced the probability of catching the flu or common cold by 80%. It also reduced the number of surfaces contaminated by viruses by 62%. It's important to note that the study included use of chemicals and using a fresh cleaning cloth for each new surface, a routine that may not always be followed in real life.

A new tool that helps maintain hygiene

The pandemic has made us all aware that even if the surfaces around you look clean, they harbor a myriad of viruses and bacteria, invisible to the naked eye. Standard cleaning methods are often not enough to remove all the germs. Regular sanitizing and disinfecting should therefore be an essential part of every business's routine to create a healthy working environment and improved well-being among co-workers.

At PureFize Technologies, we believe that modern science can be an incredible force for good. We have a long history of using ultraviolet light for germ reduction and our unique technology platform PureFize® is the ultimate tool to help you to effectively reduce germicidal spread in office settings without any additional resources, efforts, and increased use of chemicals. PureFize can be used discreetly and without being noticed to disinfect desks, keyboards and small electronics, lockers, water dispensers, coffee machines, and much more.

That said we need to add that it is rarely desirable to remove all microorganisms from the environment, creating sterile conditions. The human immune system needs to be exposed to various bacteria and our body must develop a normal bacteria flora. However, by reducing the number of pathogens in highly contaminated areas at work we can clearly improve overall employee health, job satisfaction and productivity.

If you want to know more about PureFize and how it can contribute to a hygienic workplace we suggest that you visit purefize.com, contact us at info@purefize.se or your preferred supplier of office furniture and equipment.

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2020>

² <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/pr/2015/worker-illness-and-injury-costs-us-employers-225-billion-annually>

³ <https://www.gccfm.com/coming-clean-the-dirty-truth-behind-uk-offices/>

⁴ Horrevorts, Mirte & Van Ophem, Johan & Terpstra, Paul. (2018). Impact of cleanliness on the productivity of employees. Facilities. 36. 10.1108/F-02-2017-0018.

⁵ <https://www.cleanlink.com/news/article/Survey-Safe-Clean-Facilities-Boost-Employee-Productivity--23315>

⁶ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19338244.2015.1058234>

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