# Improving indoor air quality may reduce incidence of flu

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As winter approaches, the decision of whether or not to have the flu jab is constantly on our minds.

The bad news is that not everyone in your workplace is likely to have it, ultimately increasing your risk of getting sick – especially if you work in an open-plan office environment, in close proximity to others.

Flu is a highly contagious viral disease. According to the World Health Organisation, there are three to five million cases of severe flu illness every year, result in 250 000 to 500 000 deaths in the industrialised world alone.

The workplace is one of the best breeding grounds for the flu virus because it spreads so rapidly in areas with ventilation. According to Hylton Cowie, commercial director of Technilamp, the reality of today's modern lifestyle is that indoor air is much more polluted than outdoor air.

“Indoor air is trapped with up to 80% re-circulated air. This air is full of contaminants such as bacteria, viruses, moulds, mildew and toxic gases, all of which have a negative effect on your health, especially if those around you are coughing and spluttering” says Cowie.

As flu impacts negatively on your health, so too does it impact negatively on absenteeism in the workplace. According to the Flu Vaccine Consortium, 66% of South Africans take leave because they are infected with the flu virus. Unproductive presenteeism within the workplace is just as costly because the sick employee is unproductive and contagious.

“Knowing how to manage indoor air quality within your workplace is vital for enhanced productivity in the winter season. Eradicating germs and bacteria from those employees already carrying the virus will keep absenteeism at a minimum and productivity at a maximum,” says Cowie.

Cowie believes the solution lies in Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) technology, which ensures the effective delivery of a continuous flow of clean air. Ultraviolet rays with UV-C wavelength destroy all pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, algae, yeast, mould and mildew. UVGI combats the dangers of re-circulated air conditioned air.

Technilamp can adapt the UVGI system to fit general office buildings and protect workers from all airborne toxins. It offers customers a range of UVGI systems which can be positioned in the main air conditioning ducting systems or in individual offices and toilets. The company provides economical and cost effective off-the-shelf or customised solutions to meet individual requirements.

Technilamp is South Africa's leading supplier of UVGI technology. Whilst the company has its roots in the medical industry, where its systems have gained wide acceptance, Technilamp's products and services are gaining an even wider acceptance in general commerce and industry.

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