

## INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL HYGIENE

### Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene are practices performed by an individual to care for one's bodily health and well being through cleanliness. Many people equate hygiene with 'cleanliness' but hygiene is a broad term including including personal habits choices as how frequently to bathe ,wash hands, trim fingernails and change clothing. Also includes keeping the environment clean and pathogen free.

### Components of personal hygiene.

Personal hygiene has many components, Following these components one may be able to advance his/her hygiene the following are some;

- Face hygiene
- Fingernail & Toenail hygiene
- Ear hygiene
- Hair hygiene
- Foot hygiene
- Environmental cleanliness



**Hygiene** generally refers to the set of practices associated with the preservation of health and healthy living. The focus is mainly on personal hygiene that looks at cleanliness of the hair, body, hands, fingers, feet and clothing, and menstrual hygiene.

Improvements in personal knowledge, skill and practice that modify an individual's behaviour towards healthy practice are the focus of hygiene promotion. Safe hygiene practice includes a broad range of healthy behaviours, such as handwashing before eating and after cleaning a

child's bottom, and safe faeces disposal. When you carry out hygiene education and promotion the aim is to transfer knowledge and understanding of hygiene and associated health risks in order to help people change their behaviour to use better hygiene practices.

**Sanitation** means the prevention of human contact with wastes, for hygienic purposes. It also means promoting health through the prevention of human contact with the hazards associated with the lack of healthy food, clean water and healthful housing, the control of **vectors** (living organisms that transmit diseases), and a clean environment. It focuses on management of waste produced by human activities.

There are different types of sanitation relating to particular situations, such as:

- **Basic sanitation:** refers to the management of human faeces at the household level. It means access to a toilet or latrine.
- **Onsite sanitation:** the collection and treatment of waste at the place where it is deposited.
- **Food sanitation:** refers to the hygienic measures for ensuring food safety. Food hygiene is similar to food sanitation.
- **Housing sanitation:** refers to safeguarding the home environment (the dwelling and its immediate environment).
- **Environmental sanitation:** the control of environmental factors that form links in disease transmission. This category includes solid waste management, water and wastewater treatment, industrial waste treatment and noise and pollution control.
- **Ecological sanitation:** the concept of recycling the nutrients from human and animal wastes to the environment.

**Personal hygiene** is a concept that is commonly used in medical and public health practices. It is also widely practised at the individual level and at home. It involves maintaining the cleanliness of our body and clothes. Personal hygiene is personal, as its name implies. In this regard, personal hygiene is defined as a condition promoting sanitary practices to the self. Everybody has their own habits and standards that they have been taught or that they have learned from others. Generally, the practice of personal hygiene is employed to prevent or minimise the incidence and spread of communicable diseases.

### **Difference between cleanliness and hygiene**

The term **cleanliness** should not be used in place of hygiene. Cleaning in many cases is removing dirt, wastes or unwanted things from the surface of objects using detergents and necessary equipment. Hygiene practice focuses on the prevention of diseases through the use of cleaning as one of several inputs. For example, a janitor cleans the floor of a health centre using detergent, mop and broom. They might also use chlorine solution to disinfect the floor. The cleaning process in this example is the removal of visible dirt, while the use of chlorine solution removes the invisible microorganisms. Hygienic practice encompasses both cleaning for the removal of physically observable matters *and* the use of chlorine for the removal of microorganisms. The hygiene practice in this example aims at preventing the spread of disease-causing organisms. Cleaning is a means to achieve this task.

## **Public health importance of personal hygiene**

The knowledge and practice of personal hygiene are vital in all our everyday activities. The purposes are:

### ***Preventing faeco-orally transmitted diseases***

The fingers may get contaminated with one's own faeces, either directly or indirectly. Activities during defecation and child bottom-washing are additional opportunities for the contamination of the fingers that facilitate the transmission of infections.

### ***Aesthetic values of personal hygiene***

A person with clean hands is proud while eating because they feel confident of preventing diseases. A teacher in a school is always happy to see their students with clean faces and eyes, and dressed in clean clothes. A mother is mentally satisfied to feed her infant with clean hands because she ensures the preservation of her child's health. Generally, cleaning oneself produces pride, comfort and dignity at home and in public places. Caring about the way you look is important to your self-esteem.

### ***Social impact***

A person with poor personal hygiene might be isolated from friendship because telling the person about the situation might be sensitive and culturally difficult. The success of a job application or the chance of promotion could be affected by poor personal hygiene; no company wants to be represented by someone who does not appear to be able to look after themselves.

## **Components of personal hygiene**

### ***Body hygiene (skin care)***

The body has nearly two million sweat glands. Moistened and dried sweat and dead skin cells all together make dirt that sticks on to the skin and the surface of underclothes. The action of bacteria decomposes the sweat, thereby generating bad odour and irritating the skin. This is especially observed in the groin, underarms and feet, and in clothing that has absorbed sweat. Skin infections such as scabies, pimples and ringworm are results of poor body hygiene.

The first task in body hygiene is to find water, soap and other cleansing materials. Taking a bath or a shower using body soap at least weekly is very important to ensuring our body stays clean. Bathing can be every day or after periods of sweating or getting dirty. The genitals and the anal region need to be cleaned well because of the natural secretions of these areas. Dry the body with a clean towel after thorough rinsing. Change into clean underwear after a bath. Changing sweat-soaked clothes after each bath is advised. Cleaning the ears after every bath is also necessary. Avoid sharing soaps and towels because of the danger of cross-infection.

### ***Oral hygiene (oral care)***

The mouth is the area of the body most prone to collecting harmful bacteria and generating infections. Our mouth mechanically breaks food into pieces. This process leaves food particles (food debris) that stick to the surface of our gums and teeth. Our mouth cavity is full of bacteria and is a good environment for bacterial growth.

The decaying process that takes place on the surface of the teeth eventually produces a build-up called *plaque* (a sticky deposit on which bacteria grow) that is then converted into *tartar* (a hard, yellowish, calcified deposit on the teeth, consisting of organic secretions and food particles). The result is tooth decay. In addition, unpleasant smelling breath (*halitosis* or *stinking odour*), teeth and gum infections could be a result of poor oral hygiene.

### ***Handwashing (hand care)***

The cleanliness of our hands is very important in all our daily activities. In our normal activities our hands frequently get dirty. There are many situations in which microorganisms are likely to attach to our hands along with the dirt. There are many communicable diseases that follow the route of faeco-oral transmission. Hand hygiene plays a critically important role in preventing this transmission.

**Hygienic handwashing** involves the mechanical removal of microorganisms from contaminated hand surfaces using soap or detergent. Handwashing should involve more than a quick rinse under a tap (faucet) or in running water.

Handwashing technique.

- First wet your hands with clean water and lather with a bar of soap.
  - Next rub your hands together vigorously and scrub all surfaces up to your wrists.
  - Clean under your fingernails.
  - Continue for 15–30 seconds or about the length of a little tune (for example, the ‘Happy Birthday’ song). It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.
  - Rinse your hands well with clean running water (pour from a jug or tap).
  - Dry your hands in the air to avoid recontamination on a dirty towel – do not touch anything until your hands are dry.
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- Wood ash will also rub off any dirt and smells. The slight irritation you feel when you wash your hands with ash shows the cleansing power of ash.
  - Local seeds such as *indod* (Lemma’s plant), which are known to be good cleaning agents, can also be used for regular handwashing.
  - Clean sand with water can be used for handwashing to help to rub off dirt.

If you don’t have soap, you can use alternatives. These serve the same purpose as the soap, to help ‘scrub’ what is stuck on your hands, so the running water can brush it off. To get clean

hands, you must POUR the water over your hands (no dipping in a bowl!). The soap or ash 'lifts' the dirt, and the water then washes off the visible dirt and the invisible germs.

As well as routine personal hygiene that applies to everyone, your daily work will include many situations when you may ask yourself when you need to wash your hands. To know when to wash your hands at home and at work, you must first identify **critical situations**; that is, situations, activities or incidents that indicate the possibility that pathogenic microorganisms are present on hands, fingers and nail surfaces.

Critical situations in everyday activity include:

- After using the toilet (or disposing of human or animal faeces)
- After changing a baby's diaper (nappy) and disposing of the faeces.
- Immediately after touching raw food when preparing meals (e.g. chicken or other meat).
- Before preparing and handling cooked/ready-to-eat food.
- Before eating food or feeding children.
- After contact with contaminated surfaces (e.g. rubbish bins, cleaning cloths, food-contaminated surfaces).
- After handling pets and domestic animals.
- After wiping or blowing the nose or sneezing into the hands (respiratory hygiene).
- After handling soiled tissues (your own or others', e.g. children).

Critical situations in healthcare activity include:

- Before and after contact with an infected wound.
- After contact with blood or body fluids (e.g. vomit).
- Before and after dressing wounds.
- Before giving care to an 'at risk' person (e.g. attending delivery, attending a baby).
- After giving care to an infected person.

### ***Face hygiene***

Our face reveals our daily practice of personal hygiene. Face hygiene includes all parts of the face. The most important area to keep clean is the eyes. The eye discharges protective fluids that could dry and accumulate around the eye. They are visible when a person gets up in the morning. The organic substance of the eye discharge can attract flies and this is dangerous because the fly is a carrier (vector) of trachoma and conjunctivitis.

A person should wash their face every morning in order to remove all dirt that they have come in contact with during the course of the day. This will keep your face clean all day. Children are advised to wash their face frequently. Never share your face towel with others.

### ***Fingernail and toenail hygiene (nail care)***

A nail is hard tissue that constantly grows. Long fingernails tend to accumulate or trap dirt on the underside. The dirt could be as a result of defecation or touching infected and contaminated

surfaces. Keeping nails trimmed and in good shape weekly is important in maintaining good health. Clip nails short along their shape but do not cut them so close that it damages the skin. Razor blades and fingernail cutters or scissors are used to cut nails. Nail cutters should not be shared with others.

### *Ear hygiene*

Ear wax accumulates in the ear canal that leads from the outer ear to the ear drum. As the secretion comes out of the ear it collects dust particles from the air. Daily washing with soap and water is enough to keep the outer ear clean. Do not reach farther than you can with your little finger into your ear. Putting in hairpins, safety pins or blunt-edged things for cleaning purposes might harm the ear. If you feel wax has accumulated and is plugging your ears and interfering with hearing, consult your doctor.

### *Hair hygiene (hair care)*

The hair follicles from which the hair grows produce oil from the sebaceous glands that keeps the hair smooth. The scalp (the skin covering the head) also has numerous sweat glands and is a surface for the accumulation of dead skin cells. The oil, sweat and dead cells all add together and can make the hair greasy and look dirty unless you wash it regularly.

Poor hair hygiene could cause dandruff and skin infections such as *Tinea capitis*. Dandruff is dead skin on the scalp that comes off in tiny flakes when sebaceous glands produce too much oil and accumulates on the scalp.

Head hair is a good harbour for head lice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*) and nits (eggs of head lice). The head louse is a tiny insect that lives by sucking blood. Children are especially prone to lice infestation. Lice spread from one head to another when there is close contact as in school environments. They make the scalp itchy and are a cause of annoyance, irritation and embarrassment. Shaving of the head hair is possible in cases of heavy lice infestation. Sharing of blades with others, however, should be discouraged.

Hair cleaning is important to ensure it stays clean, healthy and strong.

The recommended procedures for cleaning the hair are:

- Use clean water to wash your hair regularly (at least twice weekly, preferably once every other day) with body soap or shampoo, whichever is available.
- Massage your scalp well. This will remove dead skin cells, excess oil and dirt.
- Rinse well with clear water.
- Conditioner is helpful if you have longer hair as it makes the hair smoother and easier to comb, but hair doesn't need to have conditioner.
- Use a wide toothed comb for wet hair as it is easier to pull through.
- Dry the hair and the head with a clean towel. Never share a towel with someone else.
- Comb the hair to look beautiful for the day.

### ***Foot hygiene (foot care)***

We spend a lot of time on our feet. Our feet sweat as we walk day and night and the sweat accumulates on all foot surfaces and between the toes. The sweat may stain the shoes and can produce an awful odour.

As well as bacteria, sweat also encourages fungal growth between the toes. This is called athlete's foot. The symptoms of athlete's foot are scaly skin and sores or blisters, which start between the toes but can often spread to the soles of the feet. This is a minor irritation and often disappears by itself but sometimes these cracks and sores become the site for other infections. The feet should be washed daily, or at least twice weekly.

Foot hygiene is also important in the treatment of *podoconiosis*, sometimes known as mossy foot. This disease causes swelling in the feet and lower legs and is common in certain parts of Ethiopia. It is a reaction in the body to very small soil particles that have passed through the skin of the feet. Podoconiosis can easily be prevented by wearing shoes at all times but, if someone is affected, careful washing and drying of the feet is an important part of the treatment.

Toenails do not have much role in the transmission of diseases. However, they can accumulate dirt and this can increase the potential for bacterial and fungal breeding e.g. athlete's foot.

### ***Armpit and bottom hygiene***

These are body parts that easily get sweaty and where ventilation is very poor. After puberty, our sweat gains a specific and unpleasant odour which may be offensive to others. The armpits and the bottom should be washed daily.

Anal cleansing is the hygienic practice of cleaning the anus after defecation. The anus and buttocks may be cleansed with clean toilet paper or similar paper products. Water may be used. Hands must be washed with soap afterwards. The use of rags, leaves, stones, corn cobs, or sticks must be discouraged as these materials can damage the skin.

### ***Clothes hygiene***

We usually have two layers of clothing. The internal layer is underwear (or underclothes) such as pants, vest and T-shirt. These are right next to our skin and collect sweat and dead skin cells, which can stain the cloth. Bacteria love to grow on this dirt and produce a bad smell in addition to the specific odour of the sweat. Underwear must be washed more frequently than the outer layer of clothing.

Clothes hygiene is an important aspect of one's dignity. Changing used clothes for clean ones every day is recommended. Washing dirty clothes requires adequate clean water, detergents (solid or powdered soap) and washing facilities (Figure 3.7). If possible, the washed clothes should be ironed to help the destruction of body lice and nits. Boiling water or insecticides can be used to destroy clothes infestation.

Frequent changing into clean clothes might not always be possible in poor households. However, the frequency of changing is advised to be twice a week for internal wear and 12 times per week for outerwear. The frequency mainly depends on the intensity of dirt on the clothes, and that depends on the climate and type of activity.

### ***Menstrual hygiene (Personal hygiene for women)***

The vagina is able to clean itself; no special care is needed other than washing the external genitals. Washing the outer genital area with clean water must be a daily practice. Change tampons and sanitary napkins or pads regularly. Always wash your hands before and after handling a tampon or pad. Clean and soft cloths can be used in place of sanitary pads. The use of dirty cloths must be discouraged. Menstrual blood-absorbing items must be properly disposed of in a burial pit or other appropriate method.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Personal hygiene is a necessity for our daily activities. It is very important for the protection of our health and helps to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
2. Personal hygiene has social and aesthetic values. An individual who follows the practice of proper personal hygiene gains confidence, pride and dignity.
3. Personal hygiene applies to all parts of the body, but hand hygiene is probably the most important for public health.
4. The procedures that apply in personal hygiene (such as handwashing and oral hygiene) need to be followed strictly to gain the best results.
5. The promotion of personal hygiene should aim to change human behaviour. The provision of hygiene information first impacts on knowledge and then practice.
6. The promotion of personal hygiene must be well planned in order to bring positive changes.



# ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

Environmental health is broader than hygiene and sanitation; it encompasses hygiene, sanitation and many other aspects of the environment that are not included in this Module such as global warming, climate change, radiation, gene technology, flooding and natural disasters. It also involves studying the environmental factors that affect health.

The World Health Organization's definition is as follows:

Environmental health addresses all the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person, and all the related factors impacting behaviours. It encompasses the assessment and control of those environmental factors that can potentially affect health.

Key phrases in this definition are *environmental factors* and *potentially affect health*.

Components of hygiene and environmental health.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Concerns</b>
Personal hygiene	Hygiene of body and clothing
Water supply	Adequacy, safety (chemical, bacteriological, physical) of water for domestic, drinking and recreational use
Human waste disposal	Proper excreta disposal and liquid waste management
Solid waste management	Proper application of storage, collection, disposal of waste. Waste production and recycling
Vector control	Control of mammals (such as rats) and <b>arthropods</b> (insects such as flies and other creatures such as mites) that transmit disease
Food hygiene	Food safety and wholesomeness in its production, storage, preparation, distribution and sale, until consumption
Healthful housing	Physiological needs, protection against disease and accidents, psychological and social comforts in residential and recreational areas
Institutional hygiene	Communal hygiene in schools, prisons, health facilities, refugee camps, detention homes and settlement areas
Water pollution	Sources, characteristics, impact and mitigation

***Environmental risk factors***

You have learned in previous Modules that infectious agents play a part in the transmission of disease. **Infectious agents** are pathogenic (disease-causing) bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa and parasites. To cause a disease, they must be introduced into our bodies in sufficient quantities. The environmental conditions and practices that facilitate the carrying of such infectious agents into our bodies are termed **environmental risk factors**. A good example is drinking water, which can be contaminated by human faecal matter that contains these infectious agents. When this water is consumed, we are likely to get diarrhoeal diseases.

There are other ways that infectious agents can get into our bodies; for example, the air we breathe can be contaminated by droplets that come out of a patient's lungs when they breathe or cough. TB and pneumonia are droplet-related infections that are transmitted in this way. There are also diseases and conditions that are not caused by pathogenic organisms, but are caused by other environmental risk factors, which may be due to chemicals or physical hazards such as noise. Major environmental risks and examples of the diseases and conditions that are related to these risks are indicated in Table 1.3. Further descriptions of these diseases can be found in the *Communicable Diseases* and *Non-Communicable Diseases, Emergency Care and Mental Health* Modules.

**Table: Major environmental risk factors with related diseases and conditions.**

<b>Environmental risk factors</b>	<b>Related diseases and conditions</b>
Contaminated water, lack of latrines, poor hand washing, inappropriate solid waste management, open defecation, vector infestation	Diarrhoeal diseases, trachoma, schistosomiasis, ascariasis, trichuriasis, hookworm, typhoid fever, relapsing fever
Indoor air pollution	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lower respiratory infections, lung cancer
Outdoor/ambient air pollution	Respiratory infections, cardiovascular diseases, lung cancer
General environmental hazards (climate, mosquitoes, nutrition)	Diarrhoeal diseases, malnutrition, malaria and other vector-borne diseases; heat exhaustion
Environmental hazards in workplaces (excess noise, heat, dust, chemicals)	Injuries, hearing loss, cancer, asthma, back pain, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

## **Human interaction with the environment**

### ***Urbanisation and industrialisation***

Urbanisation and industrialisation bring rural people into urban centres that may not be ready to handle the additional sanitary needs. Ethiopia is at the stage of rapid development with priorities in agriculture and industry. Currently small-scale industries that bridge agriculture and industrialisation are booming. Large-scale industries, such as textiles, food and cement, are growing. The need to improve and expand social infrastructures such as water supply, waste management and health services is obvious in order to handle the needs of the growing urban centres. As a healthworker you need to understand that these developments have environmental health risks due to overcrowding, inappropriate waste management and a shortage of safe drinking water.

### **The role of environmental health in public health**

Environmental health is a part of public health where the primary goal is preventing disease and promoting people's health. Environmental health is associated with recognising, assessing, understanding and controlling the impacts of people on their environment and the impacts of the environment on the public. The role of the environmental healthworker, therefore, includes the following functions of public health:

- Improving human health and protecting it from environmental hazards.
- Developing liaison between the community and the local authority, and between the local and higher levels of administration.
- Acting independently to provide advice on environmental health matters; designing and developing plans of action for environmental health.
- Initiating and implementing health/hygiene, sanitation and environmental programmes to promote understanding of environmental health principles.
- Enforcing environmental legislation.
- Monitoring and evaluating environmental health activities, programmes and projects.

You, as a healthworker, are very much involved in all of the above except (e) and (f), which are mainly carried out by the *woreda* environmental healthworker. However, the *kebele* administrator may ask you to help with the enforcement of environmental legislation, if deemed appropriate.

### **Environmental health planning**

Environmental health planning refers to a systematic process by which goals are established, facts are gathered and analysed, alternative proposals and programmes are considered and compared, resources are measured, priorities are established, and strategies and activities are designed to meet the established goals or objectives within a specified period of time. You, as part of *kebele* cabinet, will be requested to prepare an environmental health plan. The approach

to planning is similar to that described in the *Health Management, Ethics and Research* Module. However, the primary focus is what makes it different. The following planning steps are suggested.

### ***Identifying the needs and gaps***

This is essentially an inventory (or list) of problems related to environmental health in your local context. You can use various tools in order to identify these problems.

- ***Environmental health survey:*** This is a systematic survey using a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains basic indicators of environmental health such as latrine availability, source of drinking water, waste disposal systems, cleanliness of the community, etc. You will need to do some statistical analysis (proportions and averages) to refine basic indicators of environmental health for your local context. You must be careful when designing a survey as it requires time, expertise and resources. You can plan it in coordination with the *woreda* environmental healthworker.
- ***Rapid/quick assessment:*** This is the usual method that helps you gain a quick overview of the range of problems. The usual data collection tools that you can use for this are focused or group discussion, physical observation with checklists and interviewing people.

# Importance of Workplace and Personal Hygiene for Corona virus pandemic -2020

Hygiene is an important and critical part of the life of any human being. The importance of hygiene can be best understood by the fact that almost every religion on earth has preached hygiene. The benefits of hygiene are not only limited to the physical structure of a human being, it also influences some psychological behaviors. It creates self-confidence, boosts morale and uplifts the self-esteem of a person.

Why is hygiene so important? Why has man converted his forests and lands into cleaner roads and proper societies? The answer is simple. Hygiene is a measure of a person's way of life. A person having good self-hygiene not only enables himself to feel comfortable in his skin but it also helps others around that person, to work in comfort. A person with good values will never ignore his personal hygiene.

Every workplace has its norms and policies. Cleanliness and personal hygiene are always part of these norms and policies. All businesses have a dress code. This dress code is a part of the self-hygiene of employees. Maintaining proper hygiene at the workplace is very important for the good reputation of businesses. Both the official authorities and the employees need to take care of hygiene. No boss would want a dirty person to represent his company in the market or in front of the public. Similarly, no employee would want to work in a firm with dirty restrooms, cubicles, and the environment. The contribution of both parties is essential for the good reputation of the firm.

## **Contribution by the workplace authorities:**

Employee retention is one of the major concerns of firms nowadays. Keeping the employees happy and content in their workplace is very important for the consistent success of the business. Employees are greatly influenced by their **workplace policies** & environment. A tempting workplace creates a good level of comfort in the employees. Keeping a workplace clean helps in creating a good environment. There are several essential measures that can help maintain the hygiene of the workplace. Some of them are mentioned below:

- Emptying the trash cans on a regular basis.
- Regular cleaning of restrooms.
- A Spray of some light air freshener in intervals.
- Cleaning of the windows.

## **Contribution by the employees:**

What would happen if an employee, who is supposed to give a presentation to a multinational company, shows up with messy hair, no tie, rough nails, dirty shoes, and smelly body? The answer is obvious, he'll get fired the minute he sets his foot in the office. The standard of hygiene of employees of a firm gives the idea of how good the firm is. Maintaining a proper self-hygiene by the employees is as critical to the repute of the firm as their performance. Some essential measures by the employees are discussed below:

- Following the proper dress code.
- Taking a bath every morning before coming to the office.
- Proper haircut and hairstyle.

- Polished shoes.

- Use of a deodorant.

Self-hygiene greatly enhances the value of a person. If employees maintain their hygiene up to the mark, they fall in the good books of the boss automatically. Also, a clean workplace ensures good health of the employees and they are less prone to contagious diseases. Consequently, the performance of the employees is greatly increased.

### **What guidelines should I be following as an employer to limit the spread and provide a duty of care to my employees?**

A number of major Australian businesses have ordered team members who have recently visited affected areas to stay at home for 14 days to avoid any potential spread.

If employers are concerned and wish to take precautionary measures, they should follow current AHPPC community recommendations. As such an employer should:

- Put out a generic communication to all employees advising that you are seeking to mitigate the risk and respond to the outbreak and as such have put reasonable precautions in place.
- List the criteria for isolation.
- Provide general health advice encouraging anyone who develops flu-like symptoms (including fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose or shortness of breath), seek medical advice immediately.
- Advise the precautionary stance is to maintain a safe environment and provide a duty of care for all employees
- Reiterate that you will continue to monitor the situation and be guided by advice from the Australian Government Department of Health in relation to your response.
- Suggest employees keep updated on current advice and information.

### **What Other Things Should Employers Be Thinking About When it Comes to the Coronavirus?**

- Employers need to be aware that should an employee be required to stay away from the workplace as a precaution, they are entitled to receive full pay and should not be disadvantaged in any way. Where possible, arrangements should be made for an individual to work from home.
- To avoid any claims of discrimination ensure that you are taking the 'front foot' and sending out generic communication to all employees. You must not target specific people.
- The Coronavirus situation is rapidly changing, employers should keep themselves informed by following federal and state government advice and updating their communication to staff accordingly.