



Health Awareness

Cleaning Surfaces May Not Be Enough To Avoid Getting The Flu

(NAPS)—One thing most people may not know is that the main way influenza viruses are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs or sneezes. A sneeze produces extremely high numbers of both very small particles that remain airborne for a long time until they are removed through a home's ventilation or filtration system, and large particles that fall quickly out of the air and contaminate surfaces. That's why it's important during flu season and throughout the year to clean both surfaces and the air in your home. In other words, getting a flu shot, eliminating germs on surfaces through cleaning, and washing hands often are important steps to avoid getting the flu. Yet many people are still vulnerable to the common flu in the air in their home.

So how do you treat the air? Now, first-of-its-kind research conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, in collaboration with scientists at Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc. (EH&E), shows that Trane CleanEffects, a whole-house air-filtration system, removes more than 99 percent of the common flu, or influenza A virus, from the filtered air.

"By removing the vast majority of the common flu virus from a home's recirculated air, the average airborne concentration of the virus in the home is reduced, thereby lowering airborne exposure to the virus for household occupants," says Dr. David MacIntosh, instructor at the Harvard Extension School and principal scientist at EH&E. "In a home with central forced air and a conventional one-inch filter, the



New study results show breakthrough technology removes common flu virus from a home's filtered air.

average virus particle would recirculate through the home about seven times before depositing on a surface or being transported outdoors. That's more than enough time to breathe in the virus, and cleaning the air in your home is an important step to improve the health of your home environment."

Cleaner, healthier indoor air is important to everyone, but it's especially critical if you or someone you love suffers from allergies or asthma.

"People with allergies and asthma are potentially at a greater risk of catching the airborne flu virus," says Dr. Paula Busse, M.D., allergy and immunology specialist, Mount Sinai Medical Center. "Additionally, patients with asthma may have a more severe course of the flu because of their underlying airway damage. For this reason, it is recommended that anyone with asthma take all measures to prevent acquiring the flu. These test results are very important be-

cause they demonstrate that installing a whole-house air cleaner can add another layer of protection against the flu for patients with allergies and asthma."

Following these good health habits can help you prevent the flu:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Keep your distance from others when you're sick to protect them from becoming ill, too.

- Cover your mouth and nose. Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing—it may prevent those around you from getting sick.

- Install a whole-house air cleaner. Use Trane CleanEffects to remove airborne particles and the common flu, or influenza A virus, from the filtered air in your home.

- Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

- Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school or running errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

- Clean your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.

To learn more about how you can protect yourself against the flu and improve the air in your home, visit trane.com/flu.

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