

# Open-Concept Offices May Not Be Good for Workers? Health



The trend in designing office spaces has been open-concept, that is, most workers have cubicles with few working in enclosed office spaces. The theory is that open-concept offices encourage collaboration. But according to a survey by Canada Life Group Insurance research, open plan offices may promote the sharing of more than just ideas.

The researchers asked workers to rank how easy it is to be healthy in their working environment. Workers in open plan offices gave an average score of 6.1, while those who work mostly from home gave an average score of 8.1.

This discrepancy is bolstered by the finding that employees who work from home took an average of only 1.8 sick days in 2013, while workers in open plan offices took 3.1 days.

One possible reason for the difference is that by encouraging 'and actually forcing' workers to interact more with their colleagues, open-concept offices also make it easier for infected workers to spread illnesses. (See, New Study Finds One Sick Worker Could Infect Half the Workplace.)

So if your office has an open plan design or your workplace is one in which workers work in open, common spaces, such as a factory floor or warehouse, make sure you encourage workers to stay home if they're sick. (Read an extreme example of what can happen when a worker who's ill comes into work anyway.)

It's also a good idea 'especially during flu season-to recommend that all workers frequently and properly wash their hands and exercise proper coughing etiquette.