INTRODUCTION
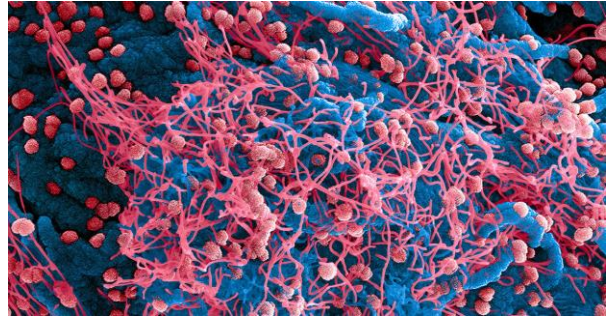
A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. There have many pandemics throughout recorded history. While pandemics can disrupt everyday life, there are many steps that the average person can take to minimize the spread and exposure of the disease. This lesson will go over how diseases are spread and how the spreading of disease can be minimized.

DISEASE TRANSMISISON

Whether you are working in a warehouse, factory, office or other industry, diseases are commonly spread in your workplace. These diseases can range from very mild such as the cold or flu, to more severe contagions. Spreading of disease can occur in the following ways:

- Coughing;
- Sneezing;
- Shaking hands or other forms of physical contact;
- Touching an object or surface that may have the virus on it then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands; and
- Fecal contamination, though this is rare.

While there is no way to stop the complete spread of germs, viruses, and bacteria, there are steps that you can take to minimize the spread of even the mildest of diseases even during a pandemic.

WAYS TO MINIMIZE THE SPREAD OF DISEASE

To help minimize the spread of germs, viruses, and bacteria during a pandemic, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you and your coworkers take the following steps:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds prior to touching your face or eating. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Along with hand washing, you should practice other common sense personal hygiene habits.
- When possible, keep a 6 feet distance between you and other people.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched objects and surfaces. For disinfection, the CDC recommends, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants. Disinfectants should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
  - Please note that cleaning staff should wear the appropriate personal protective equipment when using disinfectant products. Specific PPE will be listed on the manufacturer-provided safety data sheet (SDS).
- Do not shake dirty laundry. Shaking dirty laundry can disperse viruses through the air. Wash items on the warmest appropriate water setting and allow items to dry completely.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET SICK?

If you suspect or show symptoms of an illness during a pandemic, here are some commonsense steps that you can take to help slow or stop the spread of the disease:

- Stay home if you are feeling sick. Depending on the severity of symptoms, you may need to seek medical attention.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Tissues should be thrown away after each use. Immediately wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after sneezing or coughing.
- The CDC does not recommend that healthy people wear a facemask. Facemasks should only be worn if you are sick and interacting with other people or entering healthcare provider's office or hospitals.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you have touched. Use disinfectants in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

TELECOMMUTING

Depending on the business that you work for and the seriousness of the pandemic, you may be required to work from home via telecommuting. Telecommuting may also be an option for those who are required to self-quarantine.

SELF-QUARANTINE

Depending on the pandemic, individuals who have traveled to areas known for outbreaks or are showing particular symptoms may be asked or required to do self-quarantine. The CDC recommends that if there is the possibility of self-quarantine, that you prepare at least 2 weeks' worth of food and required medications. Quarantines can last for verifying lengths of times. If you have questions about an appropriate length of time either check the CDC's website or call your doctor. If symptoms are severe, you should call and speak with your doctor.

CONCLUSION

To review, viruses have been plaguing humans for centuries. Knowing what to do when a pandemic happens will help keep people calm and keep business running. You can help minimize the spread of all disease by following commonsense hygiene practices and staying home when sick.