



Absenteeism costs New Zealand businesses with 100 employees up to \$100K per year^[2]

Health and wellbeing are increasingly recognised as critical factors in achieving a high performing, productive workplace. However the true price of absenteeism continues to rise, at a cost to our economy of \$1.79bn in 2018.

According to the Workplace Wellness Report in 2019 conducted by the Southern Cross Health Society and BusinessNZ, an absent employee typically costs their employer NZD \$600 to NZD \$1,000 a year^[2].

There are many reasons that lead to employee absenteeism, but by far the largest cause (89.9%) of absenteeism continues to be minor preventable illnesses (e.g. cold, flu, tummy bug, headache)^[3].

Activities like vaccination programmes are helpful, but this is essentially the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to cut the spread of infectious diseases - the human hand is responsible for spreading 80% of common infections ^[4].

Many businesses feel that they have adequate provision for hand washing, but **for every 100 people, 95% fail to wash their hands long enough to kill harmful bacteria** ^[5]. At best, failure to review this area adequately can lead to increased illness and absenteeism costing your business time and productivity. At worst, this illness can lead to contamination and recall of products for human consumption.

Comprehensive review of hand hygiene systems and the education that accompanies it is recommended in order to avoid this. [Contact Snell Packaging & Safety](#) to organise a Hygiene Health Check of your hand hygiene systems and processes.

^{[2], [3]} Workplace Wellness Report 2019, Southern Cross Health Society and BusinessNZ, Stephen Summers, p12-17.

^[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC Quick Reference Guide for Public Information on Infection Control.

^[5] Borchgrevink, C.P, Cha, C., Kim, S. Michigan University. Hand Washing Practices in a College Town Environment, 2013.