Why allergies are more than irritating

A toolkit to help employees understand the serious health risks of allergies

Educate employees on the impact of allergies

Allergies may not seem like a serious health concern. And, for some people, they aren't. But for millions of people around the world, allergies are deadly serious. There are many different kinds of allergies, and none of them are curable. At best, they are manageable. At worst, they are debilitating and deadly.

In Australia, allergies are among the fastest growing chronic conditions currently affecting more than 4 million Australians.[1] Here are just some impacts of allergies on work productivity and healthcare costs:

- In 2005, the total financial cost of allergic diseases alone was estimated to be approximately AU$30 billion (ASCIA Access Economic Report 2007), comprising $1.1 billion in direct health system expenditure, $7.1 billion due to lost productivity and $21.3 billion due to lost wellbeing (disability and premature death).[2]
- In per capita terms, this amounts to a total cost of approximately $7,400 per person with allergies per annum.[2]
- In 2010, nasal allergies (also known as allergic rhinitis) was diagnosed during 11.1 million doctor visits worldwide[3], with related medication costs in Australia estimated to be $226.8 million.[1]

It is challenging to provide materials that cover the full spectrum of allergies. MetLife has created this employee education campaign "Why allergies are more than irritating" which focuses on respiratory (inhaled) and food allergies.

What's in the Toolkit?

- Campaign Objectives
- Marketing Materials

Campaign Objectives

- Educate employees on the serious health risks associated with allergies
- Provide recommendations for how they can manage allergies to minimise debilitating or life-threatening reactions
- Raise awareness of the dangers of food allergies, so they can be prepared to make accommodations to keep employees safe

Marketing Materials

1. Campaign emails

- **Week 1:** Should you be alarmed about allergies?
- **Week 2:** When you take a bite and it bites you back
- **Week 3:** A little sneezing or respiratory distress

2. Short articles

- I have a food allergy—work with it!
- Tips for managing food allergies at work
- Is it a cold, nasal allergy, or allergic asthma?
- Why doesn't my body just get used to allergens?

3. Flyers

- Basic facts about food allergies
- Is your common cold actually a chronic allergy?
- Diagnose, avoid, treat: how to manage allergies

What is MetLife 360Health?

MetLife 360Health defends you against serious illness, so you can live healthier for longer. MetLife recognises that we all need support, not just when faced with an accident or illness, but at all stages of our life.

A holistic, integrated suite of solutions covering tools, services and resources, MetLife 360Health complements our insurance products. It focuses on customers as both individuals and employees, taking into account mind, body, environmental and work factors.

It also aims to facilitate better health literacy, improve health support and deliver on improving health outcomes.

MetLife 360Health, your health partner.

1. National Allergy Strategy, “Improving the health and quality of life of Australians with allergic disease”, August 2015
2. Australiasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy Inc, “Allergy and Immune Diseases in Australia (AIDA) Report”, 2013
3. World Allergy Organization, “Food Allergy—A Rising Global Health Problem,” April, 2013

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